METHODIST

ERROR;

OR,

FRIENDLY, CHRISTIAN ADVICE,

To those Methodists,

Who indulge in extravagant emotions and bodily exercises.

BY A WESLEYAN METHODIST.

"Let all things be done decently and in order, unto edification; for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace."

"AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM."

TRENTON:

PUBLISHED BY D. & E. FENTON.

1819.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016 with funding from
Duke University Libraries

https://archive.org/details/methodisterroror1819wesl

METHODIST ERROR;

OR,

FRIENDLY, CHRISTIAN ADVICE,

To those Methodists,

Who indulge in extravagant emotions and bodily exercises.

BY A WESLEYAN METHODIST.

"Let all things be done decently and in order, unto edification; for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace."

"AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM."

TRENTON:

PUBLISHED BY D. & E. FENTON.
1819.

DISTRICT OF NEW-JERSEY, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the second day of January, in the forty-third year of the independence of the United States of America, DANIEL & E. FENTON, of the said District, have deposited in this office the title of a book the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

"Methodist Error; or friendly Christian Advice, to those Methodists who indulge "in extravagant emotions and bodily exercises. By a Wesleyan Methodist. Let "all things be done decently and in order, unto edification; for God is not the "author of confusion but of peace." Audi alteram partem."

In conformity to an act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned." And also to the act, entitled, "An act supplementary to the act entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;" and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

(L. S.) WILLIAM PENNINGTON,
Clerk of the District of New-Jersey.

M592E

THE PUBLISHERS' ADDRESS.

IT is not the design of the publishers to assume any responsibility for this work. The *press* being *free*, they have published it as freely as they would any other similar, or counter work, of equally respectable composition ;—well knowing, that their desisting, had they been so inclined, would not have deterred others from publishing it. They are quite sure, that very many, have expressed a wish to see the present topics *fairly discussed :* and the present work, they are inclined to believe, may serve as a proper *introduction*. They take therefore this occasion to intimate, that if their readers or friends desire to suggest any improvements, or valid objections, their written communications, post paid, shall receive due attention, in any future edition.

Any respectable publisher, who wishes to re-publish it, in any remote section of the country, will find no difficulty to gain the assent of the proprietors, on making due application to them in Trenton.

ERRATA.

The reader will please to make a correction of the following Errors :—

Page 29 line 8 from the top, for *in* his, read *on* his.

47——7 from the top, for *See* read *Sir* John.

86——3 from the bottom, for *three* read *third.*

87——7 from the bottom, for *found* read *formed.*

88——7 from the bottom beginning with the word *Second,* the whole paragraph of three lines should have been in *italics,* so as to show the commencement of a new subject.

89——10 from bottom, for *indeed* read *intended.*

90——1 of the Note, for *them* read *their.*

91——7 from the top, for *fecings* read *feelings.*

92—— each time the Acts are cited in this page, should have been printed as a distinct paragraph.

145——3 from the bottom, for *beware* read *be aware.*

165——8 from the bottom, for as well *as,* read as well.

PREFACE.

Methodist Reader.

THIS little book is written *specially* for *your* benefit. The author has no pecuniary interest in its sale, nor any *party* end to answer. He is one of your brethren of long and approved standing among you; and his *sole* motive in the present work is to do good: to point out the *way of error*, that you may shun it; and to show the *way of God*, that you may walk therein.

He has seen with much pain and regret some signs of *enthusiasm* and *error* crept into our church, which *should* have been checked by those who were our *overseers* in the Lord. He verily believes that *they* should have *restrained* and *not fostered* the unprofitable emotions of *screaming*, *hallowing* and *jumping*, and the *stepping and singing* of *senseless*, merry airs. These have often prejudiced true and vital religion. And because no man hath hitherto regarded these things, in this way, the author, however deficient in his task, is disposed to contribute his mite towards the suppression of a growing evil. The following pages therefore, contain his views upon the subject: and he is pleased to add, they are supported, by many very powerful arguments from those great lights of our infant church. John and Charles Wesley, John Fletcher, Dr. A. Clarke and others.

He has endeavoured so to write as that no sober minded and candid christian may condemn him. He is sure he feels nothing contrary to love and charity, and *he has* a fond persuasion, that even many of those who have been honestly misled, will not be offended at the manner of his arguments, drawn as they are from scripture and reason, with the laudable motive of bringing *them* back into the sober path of *good old Wesleyan Methodism.*

He entreats all those who are interested in the subject matter of this work, to give it their candid attention. If you love *truth*, fear not to *try* it. Truth must bear the strictest scrutiny. "*Audi alteram partem,*" (hear *both* sides) is a wise *maxim* consecrated by experience. Mark how our church has already sanctioned this sentiment!—"It is desired," says the *resolution* of the first Methodist conference which ever met, (in 1744) "that we meet as *little children* who have *every thing to learn;* that *every point* may be *examined* to the *foundation.* Need we *fear* this? of *overturning* our *first* principles? (nay), if they are *false* the *sooner* they are overturned the *better:* If they *are true,* they will *bear* the strictest examination. Let us *all* then *pray* for a *willingness* to receive light, to know of *every* doctrine whether *it* be of God." *May we* their children, neglect rules of actions so sound as these!

Dr. A. Clarke in *his* "adviee to preachers," has said, "do not think, that this or that one, cannot instruct *you.* He may be *weak*—but the meanest of

God's sending will be directed to bring something to the wisest and holiest christians."

The great and good Whitfield, himself, confessed very penitently, that "he had been *too rash* in many things. I have *often* been *too bitter* in my *zeal; wild fire* has been *mixed* with *it*—and I *find*," says he, "I have *frequently written* and *spoken* in my *own* spirit; have *mistaken nature* for *grace; imagination* for revelation: even when I *thought* I was acting with the *assistance* of the spirit of God." Even both John and Charles Wesley were *once* too prone to mysticism: "with that poisonous mysticism," as John Wesley called it, "which not a little tainted us before we went to America."

The great Locke, than whom, no man has more deeply looked into the *ground* of *error* and *prejudice*, has said, "he that does not give a *patient* hearing, and *weighs* not the arguments on *the other side*, does *in fact*, confess that it is *prejudice* which *governs* him; and he seeks not the *evidence* of *truth*, but some lazy anticipation, or beloved *presumption*, on which he *desires* to *rest undisturbed*."*

"Finally, brethren, *prove* all thing; *hold fast* that which *is* good"! Remembering what the Proverbs say, "He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul; but, he that heareth reproof getteth understanding."

* I will remark *once for all;* that the *quotations* which will be found in this work, although faithful as to *substance*, are not always in the precise method or order of the original. The aim has been to give on all such occasions, the *sense* in the *fewest* words—solely for the sake of *brevity*.

METHODIST ERROR.

CHAPTER I.

AS Methodists, we have all long known, that there has been considerable division of sentiment among us, respecting the *character* of our religious exercises. The more sober and steady, have been advocates for the literal observance of "*edification, decency,* and *order;*" and these we all know have always been the *major* part. The minor part, have been, on the contrary, very zealous for the literal practice of *shouting, leaping* and *jumping,* and other outward signs of the most heedless emotion. These views so diametrically opposite to each other, evince the prevalence of *error* somewhere: both cannot be right. That a few of such noisy christians have heretofore given Methodist meetings a *character,* contrary to the sense of much the greater part of the societies, we have all seen and known:

because *turbulence* from its nature, must *sound* greater to ordinary hearers, than the calmer piety of those, who as St. Paul enjoins, "study to be quiet." That part of the society too, have been not only zealous to preach and exhort to these actions and emotions, but have actually published *books*, to propagate their opinions and practices.

With these views of the matter, the present writer, has been induced to offer *other views* of the subject. These thoughts are not the hasty ebulition of the moment; they have occasionally engaged his consideration and attention for several years: and indeed, all that he now presents to his reader, is but the arrangement of various notes and readings made at various times and occasions, without the remotest view to *present* publication: and *now*, I cannot pretend with a publisher of opposite sentiments, that I am "supernaturally" impelled to my task:—For I do not expect, that, where the gifts *common* to christians—*judgment*, *reason* and *written revelation*, are already sufficient, there will be any *extraordinary* endowment conferred—but seeing that "the *world* by its wisdom knows not God, neither indeed can—and that spiritual things are spiri-

tually discerned," I will frankly expose the grounds of *my* pretentions to any knowledge in this matter: and then I shall proceed to present those considerations to the mind of the reader, which are the object of this publication.

I know then, that God by his grace, several years since, was pleased to *change* my heart, by the influence of his spirit, from a state of nature to a state of grace; that he did this, by giving me due convictions of my utter sinfulness by nature and practice, and then shewing me lively tokens of his reconciliation and favour, by causing me from the time of change, to overcome the sins which did before most easily beset me. Since then, times out of number, I have *felt* the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, by his softening, comforting, and gracious impressions, filling the heart with joy and gladness. But I have never been excited to any strong emotions, which I *could not* restrain, because I have always been a *free agent;* and I have therefore never lost a sense of "decency," nor have ever *forgotten* to watch my actions, so as to save my "good from being evil spoken of," nor that I was *enjoined* "to have a *good report* from those which are *without:*" but aiming in all

things at "sobriety, gravity," and "sound speech," which cannot be condemned by him that is of the *contrary part*, that thereby opposers to vital religion, might "be ashamed, having no evil to say of me." But with impressions like these, I never forsook the most *irregular* meetings of others: but being a man open to conviction and earnest for the truth, I have always been sincerely willing to see and to acknowledge the *real* work of the spirit. I have valued my soul as of much more worth, than the miserable gratification of *doing* any thing, or *forbearing* any thing, for the sake of securing the approbation of mere worldly men. I have scarce expected "God's children to be *still-born*," or that those who love God much, should be in favour with the careless world. I know I could submit to any exposure and evil revilings for the sake of pleasing my God; *if it were required;* and I know it, by this sure evidence, that while yet a man of the world, accustomed to its honours and its pleasures, in its more refined forms, I most cordially chose to have my name "cast out as evil," from among my former friends, and to join "the sect every where spoken against" as my *better* portion; and I have hitherto contiued with them in their reproach, although I have seen

things to condemn. Am I then less qualified to judge of these things, than those of my brethren who have assumed to themselves the same privilege of judging and advising? I trust not. I suppose too, I have a *charter* privilege in the *book of Discipline*, which allows every Methodist "to watch over each other in love, and to help each other" by advice. I proceed therefore to give *my* opinion. I am no oracle, and claim only to be heard as any other man.

In treating of my subject, I purpose *first* to consider and to review in general terms, the conduct, character and pretension of those of our brethren who *exercise* in the way to which I am now to file my exceptions.

Then I shall more particularly consider *in detail* all those passages of the *old* Testament which are supposed to countenance the things in question, endeavouring to show their real import, and the misconception of those who have so used them.

Then I shall proceed, to notice the power and influence of religion as spoken of in the gospels, *before* the ascension of our Lord and the decent of the Holy Ghost.

Then will follow of course, that I consider the deportment, character and habits of christians *after* the ascension, and when the Spirit, the Comforter, actually *influenced* the first christians; and by *their example*, I shall contend *we* ought to be influenced and regulated now.

CHAPTER II.

ACCORDING to the foregoing arrangement, I proceed now to consider, *first* the conduct of our brethren whose *exercises* I condemn.

I believe in the fact, that sinners do sometimes cry for mercy under the "sense of the weight and burden of sins (as the church service expresses it) too intolerable to be borne;" and I believe, when *some* convictions are thus powerful, they will be proportionably expressive of their joy at deliverance. But I do not believe, that these, or any other people, will be *graciously* led into the like excessive feelings and outward signs, in all their future ordinary meetings.* When

* I wish my reader to bear constantly in his mind this *general* remark! My book is not against the *actions* or expressions of *convicted* sinners, but against *converted* christians. In my remarks at the close of Mr. Wesley's objections in the appendix, I have explicitly said, saints *may* observe St. Paul's rules of decorum and restraint, but sinners, but rarely—I tolerate sinners' concerns and expressions as both irresistible and reluctant. Unseemly actions from such, who were just before avowed enemies to them,

I see such things occur, my observation and experience of their general deportment inclines me to think as Mr. John Wesley did, that they are but "honest, well meaning persons, who *really* feel the love of God in their hearts, but have little experience either of the *ways* of God, or the devices of Satan; so *he* serves himself of their *simplicity*, in order to wear them out, and to bring a *discredit* on the work of God." They aim to affect irregular meetings as most affecting their *feelings;* not considering that where there are no extraordinary *convicted* persons, there is no *cause* to make the effect they seek. Such persons, in my opinion, learn a *habit* of vehemence; they see *example*, and they sometimes hear of *precept* from those who should be their *teachers* of *better*

---

and scoffers, scarce want an apology. I am disposed to think, that it is from an inattention to this just *discrimination*, that we see some saints *affecting* to make irregular meetings *as their duty*, when in fact *they must* proceed, if at all, from *sinners* who *cannot* well help themselves, or but very imperfectly and feebly—and especially, if *Satan* much urges their condemnation.

things. If we inspect them closely, we discern that they are mostly persons of credulous, *uninformed* minds; who, before their change to grace, had been of rude education and careless of those prescribed forms of good manners and refinement, of which polite education is never divested—and which indeed, religion ought to cherish. [See Dr. Clarke in the appendix: he says, *civilization* and piety must go hand in hand, &c. and also, the Thoughts on our obligations to acquire judgment and knowledge.] They fancy, that all the restraints of conduct: viz. "sobriety, gravity and blamelessness," is a formality and resistance of the Spirit: and so to avoid it, they seem rather to go to the other extreme, and actually run before it. In such cases and persons, they never seem to consider it *possible* that Satan may have any power or subtlety, to offer his aid in their sensations, or as an angel of light. Yet we know he can! [See John Wesley in the appendix, on the Power of Satan, and also Edwards.] I have seen and known several persons who have been exercised with *falling down, jumping up, clapping of hands,* and *screaming,* all in a manner to

disturb the whole congregation, who could habitually when at home, live careless and sometimes trifling lives. They appeared to make religion *a business* of *passion* and *emotion*, and studied *most* to acquire *occasional frames* and *feelings*.* It should be a deep

* In connexion with this, read Mr. Wesley's Thoughts on fondling words in Devotion, in the appendix—"let us *prevent*, says he, loud shouting, *horrid* unnatural screaming, jumping and throwing about of the arms and legs, in a manner *shocking* not only to religion, but to decency. Read also Dr. A. Clarke's charge to "avoid all quaint and fantastic attitudes, queer noddings, &c. &c. which prejudice and grieve many." Scougal in his excellent work, the Life of God in the Soul of man," says—"others put all religion in the *affections*, in rapturous heats and ecstatic devotion; and all they *aim* at is, to pray with passion, and to think of heaven with pleasure; and to be affected with those kind and melting expressions wherewith they court their Saviour, till they persuade themselves that they are mightily in love with him." This *alone* is not the life of God in the Soul of man! We cannot easily forget the actions of H. R. among us. His *feelings* were a perpetual weathercock! To day filled with the most extravagant signs of gladness; and to morrow gloomy almost to despair! Yet how low he fell! Alas! to act

and weighty subject to such, to consider whether the good derived to *themselves* in any case, could equal half the *harm* done to *others* in membership, and to serious en-

---

so high and fall so very low! Could such a man's religion have been injured by St. Paul's restraints? Who can forget the extravagance of another preacher, who excited it in others, even at a time he was living in sin, with one who was herself a *great jumper*. We are indeed ashamed to remember these things, but if we conceal and forget such appalling admonitions, how shall we profit by experience!—A jumper, who was a concealed sinner, *told me*, after repentance, that she found a lively sensibility of pleasure in the exercise, but dreadful deadness when quiet. Here then was a sure evidence that Satan could give false joy! Now she can enjoy religion without it. Even while this note is penning—a case occurs within my own knowledge, of religious extravagance, wherein I have no doubt the actor thought herself doing God service: the Rev. J. R. on Bristol Circuit, was leading his *class*, when coming to a Mrs. ——, she rose up to speak her state—after declaring her sense of a glorious change wrought, she began to close it with stamping, clapping her hands, and at last jumping. In this state, as he had many others to speak to, and no time to spare, he whispered in a subdued voice, "sister please to sit down."—At this word she fired,

quirers after truth in general! For the sake of indulging some three or four extravagant persons, a whole congregation, and all the public who *hear* of it, are prejudiced and hindered from joining us.* How *selfish* then must be their spirit, who for a few occasional public exhibitions, can be content to

---

she shouted louder and louder, vociferating "No man shall stop me from praising God aloud! No man shall make me be still. You, Sir, are an opposer to the work of God, and *I will* shout his praise." The brethren then began to sing, as if to drown her voice and quiet her—but she *bruited* so much the more. The sequel was, the minister was obliged to give a prayer and close the meeting. At the same place, nine young members proposed to withdraw because they were hindered, as they thought, from being as noisy as they wished. Now mark! this *misled* woman, will be set down, and they also who partook of her sensibilities: but wherein does their noisy desires differ from those who are actually countenanced, except that *they mistimed* their emotions! Do these *facts* offer no matter for amendment? Should they not lead to some practical reformation?

* Read in connexion with this, John Fletcher's Views of Religious Extravagance, in the appendix, and Edwards on the Affections.

lay such stumbling blocks in the way of others! This is far indeed from the spirit of St. Paul, who strove by all means to "*win* men to Christ," and "to *persuade* with all long suffering and *forbearance*." What *great* grace, then, should these *selfish* christians be attainers unto, for all this *great price!* Let *them* consider, how many souls, have their meetings spoiled, for their single gratification! We do not observe, however, that such are more generally *sanctified* than their more quiet fellows; but we often have observed, that as their religion is sought for, more in the *feeling* and sensible *signs of pleasure*, than in a settled, stable conviction of the *understanding*, they have been least *stable* when pressed under troubles and temptations. Now, a religion which is seated in the understanding, and felt in the heart, is stable, meek, quiet, gentle; and always adheres to God closest in all its extremities and trials.—It seems to be a fact, that those turbulent christians too, are least *charitable*—They are not ready to grant excuses for those of more stable habits, and would fain draw them by their *chidings* into their example.—I feel persuaded, their

own hearts will witness with me, in this assertion; and further, that they have never experienced, that kind of charitable *forbearance* commanded by St. Paul—to wit: "not to offend by their acts, their weaker brethren; nay, not so much as to eat meat (though so essential to life itself) if it offend, while the world stands." The great argument with these people is, that to *restrain*, is to quench or grieve the Spirit. This is error. We are given *judgment* on purpose to exercise it. Paul's address to the Corinthians, shows, that even in cases where the Spirit of God gave prophecies and inspirations, for the express purpose of declaring them, they were still required to restrain them "to edification," so as to speak in turn, and one by one:* and pursuing the

* Quaker preachers literally practise this. But says a bigot, their *inspiration* is a conceit: God forbid I should think so. I see among them *lives*, which nothing but *grace* could effect; and by the rule of holy living, I confess God's power among other people also: for God weighs actions, rather than doctrines. That our society do often virtually on other occasions, freely venture to restrain and check the avowed operations of the Spirit, when it best suits their

same lesson, he enjoins them to conduct their religious worship always by the rules and the restraints of "*decency* and *order*." Now I would affectionately ask our turbulent

---

convenience, is manifest from several facts. Our Conference, for instance, feels no scruple to decline the use of any man's ministry who comes to them, on the motion of the *Holy Ghost*, if expediency is not also in his favour. In love feasts it is very common, to check those who seem moved to speak too long, and finally the meeting is ended while there are yet several who think they have motions to speak. But a yet stronger case is within the writer's knowledge. At the *black* Bethel church in Philadelphia, it has been common to check the immoderate noise of the people, when the preacher has been hindered in his discourse. The Rev. R. S—, when stationed in Philadelphia, after preaching through much acclamation, came down to the altar, saying he had some thing special to communicate. He thus hushed them :—after proceeding a little, a rising murmur, began to drown his voice—and he would appease them again and again in this way—"Stop, stop, my honies, not now! bye and bye!" then they would bridle in, and so he and they alternately drew in and let out, till he showed the sign of ending, by waving his handkerchief with the word *now*! Then the whole church was in an instant uproar, jumping and shouting, till "they made the welkin ring." A minister who preached there, and believed that such religion was greatly mechanical, said, he could raise or lower their spiritual efflata at

friends, wherein they are sensible of governing themselves by either of these injunctions? Whether in fact, they do not hold it meritorious contrariwise, to give to their

---

his pleasure, and that he had actually made the experiment:—to paint the joys of religion was sure to raise them, and to speak of the practical holiness of their duties was as sure to silence them. Yet even this minister, though well-meaning, dared not to teach such people the errors of their fancies. They have now parted from us, and we are not sorry. Some well meaning Methodists, will be, I am persuaded, shocked to see me on several occasions, adduce such facts of illustration; and they will be ready to think, I am acting the part of an enemy. They will think I betray my cause by these exposures! But I only relate facts which have been displayed before thousands. The whole population of Philadelphia, who pass and repass such exercises, (and more than has been here told) may have witnessed, and been prejudiced against us by these things. But some will say, These things do not prevail in *our church!* This is no paliation; if our ministers any where suffer religion to run wild under their administration, we are all, as one body, disparaged thereby; and for many of us, who are known to be hostile to excesses, to hope to escape just reproach because we may shun the knowledge of public opinion and report, is as idle as the stupid ostrich, who when pursued, thinks himself safe if he can only loose sight of his pursuers by concealing his own head. This is like shutting our eyes and ears, and fancying others as unobserving as ourselves.

passions the entire reins; nay, even to desiring to forget themselves, and to fancy they are lost and swallowed up, in a partial *senselessness* of time and place. I have myself actually witnessed an entire unconsciousness of the most indelicate female attitudes, even in the house of God! One of our *lapsed* ministers, (Mr. *F–x*) says he fell into sin, by the influence of such a spectacle. Are these people, themselves being judges, (for I hope they will submit to self-examination as we go along,) ever afraid of the errors of *enthusiasm?* I guess not—perhaps they scarce ever pray against it. Yet we ought always to fear and expect it.* The history of the corruptions of the church in all ages has shown us, that in every age, the churches which once did run well, have been overthrown or humbled by it. Now, can such heedless christians be truly on their watch tower? I have remarked of such, that, their meetings have not been most affecting when the preacher

* See Locke on Enthusiasm and Error, in the appendix; and consider Whitefield's frank confession, and John Wesley on the power of Satan.

has dwelt upon the strict holiness of our *duties*—such have made silent hearers; but when a zealot has chosen topics for arousing the feelings, or has shown his own, they have caught his spirit and echoed his strains. Religious feelings to be *true* should be *universal*—making due allowance for the natural temperaments of different persons. Thus if a man or woman must needs *jump*, it must pre-suppose them always qualified—but I have seen such a woman stilled with the sense of her approaching *maternity*, or by the presence of an infant on the arms. Is her religion then quiescent! A man too occasionally, becomes lame, or uses his crutch, will his ceasing diminish his fervour! Some too we trust have their religious fervour on their beds. Do any of these people *jump* or *scream*, at home, in the street, at the affecting occasions of taking the elements of sacrament, in other churches:* Are not these emotions too, quite

* We see no such affections in other churches: and although we think we may assume, that we have in general more of the spirit with us; yet that every other church has individuals among them as holy as

unlike their usual manner of expressing any other joy or gladness? why the *difference!* In closet devotion, we should expect most of these exercises, because there we enter more peculiarly into the very presence of Deity; there too, we might be as vehement as we could, without offence to others. Let the jumpers and the screamers answer why on such occasions and with such opportunities to indulge, they can be rather silent and secret than otherwise! Why is it that for one man, who jumps or screams, there are many women; is this as if grace was equal? How is it that many instances of women who while single are conspicuous in these things, desist altogether after marriage? Why is it, that scarce any of our preachers exercise in this way, if grace constrains? Nay, when or where did any of the *apostles* or fathers ever scream or jump or shout? Finally, how can we as avowed free agents, who are given to choose for ourselves in *all*

---

any of ours, we must grant, or be most arrant bigots. But none of these know any thing of religion in this way! How is it then? The time was too, even among ourselves, when it was not seen or known. It began in Virginia, and as I have heard, among the blacks.

things, pretend that we have not the controul of our emotions! Our doctrine is, "Heaven persuades; Almighty man *decrees*."*

We have too, a growing evil, in the practice of singing in our places of public and society worship, *merry* airs, adapted from old *songs*, to hymns of our composing: often miserable as poetry, and senseless as matter,† and most frequently composed and first

---

* See Charles Wesley in the appendix, how readily they governed their emotions, when he declared, "I do not think the better for any one for crying out. Yet he adds, I never had more success than here."

† "Touch but one string, 'twill make heaven ring," is of this character. What string is that which can effect this! Who can give any sense to it? Take another case: "Go shouting all your days," in connexion with "glory, glory, glory," in which go shouting is repeated six times in succession. Is there one particle of sense in its connexion with the general matter of the hymn? and are they not mere idle expletives, filled in to eke out the tunes? They are just exactly parallel to "go *screaming*, *jumping*, (or any other participle) *all your days! O splendour, splendour.*" Do those who are delighted with such

sung by the illiterate *blacks* of the society. Thus instead of inculcating sober christianity in them who have least wisdom to govern themselves; lifting them into spiritual pride and to an undue estimation of their usefulness: overlooking too the counsel of Mr. Wesley, who has solemnly expressed his opinion in his book of hymns, as already amply sufficient for all our purposes of rational devotion: not at all regarding his condemnation of this very practice, for which among other things he actually expelled three ministers (Maxwell, Bell and Owen: see the appendix) for singing "*poor, bald, flat, disjointed hymns:* and like the people in Wales, singing the same verse over and over again with all their might 30 or 40 times, "to the utter discredit of all sober christianity;" neglecting too, the counsel of Dr. Clarke in this matter, "never to sing hymns of your own composing in public, (these are also the very words of injunction of our own Discipline, page 82,) un-

---

things, consider what delights them? Some times too, they are from such impure sources, as I am actually ashamed to name in this place.

less you be a first rate poet, such as can only occur in every ten or twenty *millions* of men; for it argues incurable vanity." Such singing as has been described, has we know, been ordinarily sung in most of our prayer and camp meetings: sometimes two or three at a time in succession. In the mean time, one and another of musical feelings, and consonant animal spirits, has been heard stepping the merry strains with all the precission of an avowed *dancer*. Here ought to be considered too, a most exceptionable error, which has the tolerance at least of the rulers of our camp meetings. In the *blacks'* quarter, the coloured people get together, and sing for hours together, short scraps of disjointed affirmations, pledges, or prayers, lengthened out with long repetition *choruses*. These are all sung in the merry chorus-manner of the southern harvest field, or husking-frolic method, of the slave blacks; and also very greatly like the Indian dances. With every word so sung, they have a sinking of one or other leg of the body alternately; producing an audible sound of the feet at every step, and as manifest as the steps of actual negro dancing in Virginia, &c.

If some, in the meantime sit, they strike the sounds alternately on each thigh. What in the name of religion, can countenance or tolerate such gross perversions of true religion! but the evil is only occasionally condemned, and the example has already visibly affected the religious manners of some whites. From this cause, I have known in some camp meetings, from 50 to 60 people croud into one tent, after the public devotions had closed, and there continue the whole night, singing tune after tune, (though with occasial episodes of prayer) scarce one of which were in our hymn books.* Some of these from their nature, (having very long repetition choruses and short scraps of matter) are actually composed as sung, and are indeed almost endless. But our Discipline has some rule on this matter, page 81, speaking of cautions in singing, says, "they must be chosen suitable, not too much at once, and

* It is worthy of remark, that not one of our appointed hymns under the article "rejoicing and praise," nor among the "new hymns," have any hymns of this character, therefore they who want them most, have to forsake that standard.

seldom more than five or six verses." The English conference has resolved "that no singing be allowed in any of our churches after the public service, as we think, say they, singing at such times tends to extinguish the spirit of devotion, and to destroy those serious impressions, which may have been made by the previous ministry. Let our preachers take care to examine the hymns which are to be sung on special occasions; and let them reject all those which are not decidedly unobjectionable in in point of sentiment and poetry, and we earnestly recommend that our own authorized hymns be generally preferred for all such purposes." Are those who sing so long, and so incessantly, (frequently they are very young and inexperienced persous) quite sure they continue to sing with the spirit and the understanding; and are they able to discriminate how little of it is of mere animal spirits?* Are they sure they have not after-

* We will not be willingly censorious, but we cannot forbear to hint at an important fact in the history of sound; musical tones are capable of infusing themselves into our nerves with the most plea-

wards felt no undue weariness of the flesh, and incompetency to engage with life and animation, in the subsequent public devotions? These are sober questions which their consciences should answer in the fear of God, for all things are to be done to his glory, and most especially in worship.

If it be just and right for one, two or three, to jump and scream, to clap their hands, and thump and pat the floor, either by stamping or by *stepping* the music, or to see-saw their bodies to and fro, then it is

---

surable emotion: Scotch soldiers can be excited to deeds of the most extravagant daring, by the mere tones of their bagpipe; our Indians are so sensible to the spell of their rude music, that they affect their bodies to its sounds, much like our blacks, until they actually fall senseless to the ground; most men have felt the influence of the violin, or of martial music on the feet; and we all have seen many of the irrational creation strangely affected by the sounds of instruments. These facts are worth the thoughtful consideration, of the young and unreflecting convert: let such test their devotion, by trying for a time, if they have equal pleasure in solemn, silent prayer and meditation. It they have not this test, I should greatly fear that their fervour is in part adventitious and animal.

right for all; and if all should once do it, we cease at once to be a "church of peace, and order as becometh the saints," and become the house of "confusion," which God has said he will not own! Indeed, what edification, or decency, or order could be expected in such an assembly? We may thank God, hitherto, such general emotion has not been permitted; or we should ere now have ceased to have had churches. Remember the *French prophets* and beware! Alas! alas! is it nothing to these people—who, to satisfy a transient feeling, hinder so many from joining our church—to consider how many may be barred out by their means? Our doctrines are so catholic in themselves, that I sometimes suppose there is scarce a sincere thinker about religion, who would not prefer us, but for these hinderances. Why then does such seeming evil prevail? Let us indulge conjecture. Is it not *scriptural* to suppose, that Satan attacks and secures some hold, more or less in every church? Such is our imperfection! Where has he his power most in ours? If we grant he has it some where, and some will be for fixing it here, and another there, may I not,

without uncharitableness, conclude he has actually taken his strong hold with us in this very thing? We admit he has more reason to assail and foil *us* than those who are at ease in Zion.* Behold the evil which it affects! What could prevent our general acceptance among all real worshippers, but this thing! But say some, how is it if this be wrong, that we have so much real religion among us? I readily answer, all the sincere, though in error, must be accepted. I actually knew a lady convicted, and afterwards converted, by beholding Christ on the cross in a Roman Chapel, because her heart then sincerely deplored the sins which made her Saviour bleed. The celebrated Rev. John Newton, has said, "I *knew* a

* Some of us have such a predilection for our excesses, that we have hardly free means to shun the influence of such a subtle enemy, or to judge of ourselves right fairly. We have so often heard scripture wharped and wrested to favour this bias, that we have need to drop many presentiments before we can judge discriminately. But we may agree with Dr. Edwards, that "the best evidence of grace is obedience and good works, and to have the consciousness that we have steadily these words on our side,—he that hath my commandments and *keepeth* them, is he that loveth me."

man who was excluded from *****'s society, for known and repeated acts of wickedness, and yet after his expulsion he continued preaching, and I believe he was owned to the awakening not of one or two, but of many sinners; perhaps of many scores." Nothing can be better attested, than the fact, that evil or misled men, may do good by uttering truth; or that the well meaning and confiding, contrite soul, may derive benefit from the preaching of any man, in whose doctrine they have implicit belief. Among ourselves, we have seen several lapsed ministers and members, actually made a blessing to their hearers. I myself have seen three of our preachers, (whose names I forbear to give,) who while living in *concealed* lewdness, dealt out their sentiments with the most fervent and welcome reception. Another, while in *secret* intemperance, made his word like a hammer wherever he went. We have seen among the Baptists, two distinguished Preachers, [one in New-York and one in Philadelphia,] and among the Independents in Philadelphia, another; all of whom while living in *hidden* sin, were considered by their several congregations, as highly useful in

their ministry. Why are such pollusions of the sanctuary occasionally permitted, but to admonish, and to convince us too, that appearances and feelings, however specious, are not the only test of judgment; the golden rule, after all, being this: "he that keepeth my commandments, (and not he that saith Lord, Lord, most) is he that loveth me!" We know very well, that Lorenzo Dow does good where he goes, for he is sincere and finds some kindred minds; but we all know he is full of fancy, and the prey of imagination, dreams and impressions, and altogether an unique and unmanageable wanderer; he may hit upon right, but he is also liable to wrong, because "deadness," "and life" are the two magic tests, by which he discerns his spirits! He reminds us of Cromwell's "particular faith."*

* It is a fact and a misfortune too, that misled men have most zeal, and so recommend their exertions and vehemence to the notice of the simple hearted, as really better than others. Nay, they are apt to think so of themselves, and therefore act with all the assurance of absolute certainty in all they do. Thus they often confirm their beholders in their own errors. The mistake in all this, is this: such men,

But with all these evils, the remaining good, in my opinion, much surpasses that of any other people, and therefore I am still a Methodist. Even the Scribes and Pharisees, bad as they were, when sitting in Moses' seat, were allowed to be a blessing in their teaching, even in the just judgment of Christ himself. As Methodists, we believe in, and seek after more of the spirituality and

---

who feel so much of some kind of spirit, take it for granted, that God will not suffer them to run into error, especially in helping his own work. Thus hoping he will send his angel, or work some miracle to set them right when wrong. This now, is the source of much of the evil; and is in truth, downright presumption. However specious it may seem, it is actually requiring Deity at our puny hands, to undo his own perfect work! "The law and testimony" he has given, "as sufficient for all our reproof and correction in righteousness:" and the misled, too zealous to abide by its sober rules and restraints, virtually say, good God "indulge our feeble frames," in this and this! We think we find such and such, new ways, do really help thy cause, &c. Is not his answer universal to such? "If any man teach any other doctrine let him be accursed," i. e. cast out as evil; as injurious. Oh! Lord our God, make us sober christians, "always inclined to thy statutes and ordinances."

power of religion in the soul, than most other people. We expect and insist upon frequent spiritual births: and our precepts as left by Mr. Wesley, surpass any other present church for holiness of living. But for our excesses, "which an enemy hath done," I verily believe, that at this time, all other people, not now otherwise engaged, who like holy living, would be of us. Oh, how immense then is our loss! who can number it; and oh! what have we gained in exchange! Tell it not in Gath!

Will these things be permitted to continue? I trust God will yet give us wisdom to avoid them: and moreover, that he will give all our rulers to know, and do aright. I do suspect the root of the evil is in some of *them*. As men, they are also partakers of the fallen nature; and in their degree "men of like passions with ourselves." They sometimes have their glory to share, and their popularity to sustain. Some of them no doubt feel, that they are susceptible of that pleasure, which comes from connecting their name with a good report of "revival," at conference. "Man pays homage to man." For instance, where is the man, now, who

with the spirit of Fletcher, [see the appendix,] is willing "to stand in the gap, and by sacrificing himself, shut this immense abyss of enthusiasm." If all our ministers were considerate and faithful enough, publicly and privately to instruct and declare, as Charles Wesley did, [see the appendix,] that there was *no* religion in the abstract, in jumping, screaming, loud shouting, and other noisy acclamations and actions; and that indeed it injured some and prejudiced many; and if tolerated at all, it must be as an unamiable and extorted appendage of religious feelings, we should, I think, accomplish a great *desideratum* indeed; and so, soon see our churches governed with the "peace that becometh the saints," with no less of vital piety; and certainly with much more general acceptance to all those whom our general faithful manner of preaching *awakens*, but which hitherto have fled to other churches.*

* We learn from Lorenzo Dow's Journal, that "the English connexion in general, are determined to prevent *noise*, as appears both from their conduct and from their publications in the Magazine." He further adds, "I saw Adam Clarke at the conference,

Indeed I have known some, who being urged to excuse this evil, to screen their names, as abettors of false doctrines, have "sought out many inventions," and have "wrested the Scriptures," from their obvious *context*, rather than grapple with the wild prejudices of a few of the people. Ah! ye ministers, disregard your popularity, in this thing be faithful, be vigilant, "sober, *blameless*, having a good report of those who are without:" "let no man despise thee." Mark what the wise and good Dr. Clarke has given us for your instruction, in his book of "Advice to Preachers," a book which I am sorry is not in your hands: "make a *conscience* to give the *literal* meaning to the

---

in July 1806—he told me, (when speaking of the nature of *revivals* at American camp meetings, about which he appeared well informed, but not friendly to) that he was at first in the spirit of the *great revival* in Cornwall, and felt opposed to some of those who then spoke of *impropriety and wild fire*, but now he *saw better*. His mind seemed fixed to the old system ORDER. When I heard him pray in public, he grew somewhat fervent, and there began a move among the people, he then seemed to lower as if to ward off the move, to prevent a noise."

people. This is a matter of great and solemn importance. To give God's word a construction he has not intended, is awful indeed! By not attending to this, heresies, false doctrines and *errors* of all kinds, have been propagated and multiplied." And speaking of *allegorical* preaching first introduced by Origen, he says, "this deceitful handling of the word of God, is degrading to the dignified doctrines of the gospel; by it no rational conviction was ever produced, and no truth was ever proved."

How often, after this manner, have we seen passages forced from their sense and context, to prop up a favourite notion or illusion! Thus to countenance *jumping*, the case of David, and the lame man in the gospel, are standing texts. But it is plain from the context, that their cases offer us no rules of *worship*; they are records of historical facts, and the manner of their deportment are necessarily connected with the two far greater events, the return of the Ark and the miracle of healing. If David was for our example in this case, then why do we not *dance* and blow the trumpet also? And if the lame man leaped, because his limbs

were restored, that he might be able to use them, and he actually uses them forthwith according to their natural use, this urges no argument for our worship, unless it was also shown, that when in the *temple at his devotions*, he actually jumped only, until, as in our cases, he fell down exhausted. But the obvious truth is, that in both cases, they acted thus because they were on the *high way*, and were of necessity in actual progressive motion—and their gladness made them use their feet and limbs more vehemently. Their action was for themselves, and their praise was for God! To show still further the perversion of the scriptures to some men's uses, it may here be remarked, that we have again and again heard it said, even from the pulpit, that Michal, David's wife, was smitten with barrenness, because she was offended at David's exposure of his person in his excess of exercise; thus intimating, that her exceptions were punished of God; and holding up the terror of this example *interrorum* to the uninformed of our day, so as to cause their quiet acquiescence in present excesses. Now where is the evidence of all this? But is it not plain, that her

offence was not against God, but against the dignity and honour of the king, "chosen before her father and her house:" and does not David himself say, he will "therefore" be honoured, i. e. received, by her maids, and she herself should no longer hold her relation as wife? "Of them shall I be had in honour, therefore, Michal the daughter of Saul, had no child until the day of her death," 2 Samuel vi. 23. It is not even insinuated, that Michal was offended at the religious procession, (30,000 of whom shouted with trumpets and timbrels) but at the king of Israel, for his personal indecorum. Nor is such severity, against offenders of the honour and dignity of the king, uncommon in the bible; king Ahasuerus, by the decree of his lords and nobles dethroned Queen Vashti, solely, because she excused herself but once from the presence of the king. And David slew the men, who from motives of affection, brought him the head of his *enemy* king Saul; giving as his reason, that they had not regarded "the Lord's anointed;" most probably, the homage which was due to the king, and the reasons of it, are not now sufficiently known to us. But

we herein perceive, if we will, wherein Michal gave her offence.

In connexion with all the preceding general views, the reader is now requested to turn his mind to the perusal of the several concurrent articles in the appendix, from the pens of John and Charles Wesley, John Fletcher, Edwards, Clarke, &c. And let us read their wise admonitions as gracious legacies to us their heirs and successors, not being "heady or self-willed," but "teachable and gentle," receiving "reproof in meekness." Considering, that if God, who sent us great men to be our leaders, has not acquainted them with any of these exercises in themselves, (but has in various instances led Mr. Wesley in particular to ascribe them to evil agencies,) we may surely be safe in discrediting them. Knowing this too, that such Apostles in the great revival of the eighteenth century, were given to us in much mercy, both as example and precept!

CHAPTER III.

Scriptures of the old Testament considered in detail, being those which have been adduced by some, as countenancing religious bodily exercises, and other strong manifestations of the passions.

IT is the practice of the Scriptures to speak in the characteristic language of the people to whom they were first delivered; and as they were first delivered to the people of the East, who to this day abound in extravagant metaphors, in our sense of judging; they are therefore extremely figurative, sometimes to obscurity; and abound with constant reference to familiar objects of sense, for its comparisons and illustrations. I think the *Jews*, from this cause, were accustomed to *hyperboles* of speech. I expect too, they were naturally vehement, passionate and giddy, some what like we see the *French*, if compared with ourselves in the present day: I expect therefore, that in their public assemblages and processions, (like the Greeks too,) they were so lively in their sensations, as to shout, and *leap*, and *dance*,

and *clap their hands*, if joyful; or if sorrowful, to rend their garments (a very silly thing!) to put on sack cloth, to cast dust upon their heads, and to howl! All these things have been manifested on occasions far from *religious*. This was in the natural temperament of the people: see John Chardin, in speaking of the genious of the people of Asia, says "their sentiments of joy or grief, are properly transports; and their transports are ungoverned, excessive and truly outrageous. When any one returns from a long journey, or dies, his family burst into cries that may be heard twenty doors off—and this is renewed at different times, and continues many days, according to the vigour of the passion. Sometimes they cease all at once, and then begin as suddenly, with a greater shrillness and loudness, than one could well imagine." The language of inspiration in the old Testament part of the bible, is addressed to the characteristic manners and habits of such a people. They were a gross people in many things; their religion too was addressed to the external senses, and with all they were an illiterate

people.* These premises will account for much of the scripture phrases—such as; "*O clap* your hands all ye people—clap your hands ye *hills*—her saints shall *shout* aloud for joy—cry out and shout, for great is the Holy one—rejoice ye righteous, and shout for joy—let the saints be joyful, &c.—sing aloud upon your beds—let the high praises of God be in thy mouth, and a *two-edged sword* in thy hand—praise the Lord in the *dance*—let the *floods* clap their hands—let the *hills* be joyful together; let the isles be glad—let all the *trees* of the wood rejoice—*skip* ye little hills." Such expressions, we perceive, are very high wrought metaphors, and are accounted for by their being all composed as poetry, and were sung by the people with musical accompaniments. "Poetic license," has now become *proverbial*, and all admit, that much *imagery* is essential to good poetry. The Eastern people, we know, to this day, use the most extravagant tropes and other figures of *speech*. The psalms, (which literally mean hymns to be sung,)

* Look into Dr. Clarke's Manners and Customs of the Ancient Israelites.

contain generally prayers, praises, exhortations and *prophecies;* and for this latter cause, many passages were then sung with musical instruments in worship, of which we now know the import and they did not; and indeed all the *sensible* religion, which they express, was perhaps more indicative of the comforts of the Holy Ghost, which should be revealed in conversions in the gospel, than any thing which the singers of that day understood. Thus David says, "I will open my dark sayings on the harp." Sometimes the tenor of the song was to excite the musicians themselves to their best musical exertions. Thus the 81st psalm, by Asaph, is addressed to the chief musician, and seems ostensibly to tell him by way of prelude, how his band should execute the service of the day: and the tenor of the whole, shows, that it was composed for the purpose of celebrating the "feast of blowing the trumpets," which was on the first day of the seventh month.* Thus the song runs: "Take a psalm or hymn, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp, with the psaltry: sing

* See *Lev.* xxiii. and *Numb.* xxix.

aloud unto God our strength : make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob, &c." Almost all the psalms, show by their *head lines*, that when composed, they were sent to a special band to be by them played on instruments, and sung in the worship. In this way we have many occasional psalms to celebrate public acts : the 68th is to commemorate the return of the ark. The three or four last psalms, are composed entirely for purposes of thanksgiving and praise : thus the 198th, is intended to celebrate the felicity of David's then kingdom : and he calls upon dragons, and all deeps, and fire, and hail, and snow, to praise his God. The poetic sense of these, and other like hymns, are poetically, and beautifully run into English verse, by Dr. Watts. They indeed excite to thanksgiving and praise, but they no more intend by them, that which should attend their literal observance, *shouting*, *clapping* our hands, or *skipping*, than that we should take "a *two-edged sword into our hand*," "gird a sword upon the thigh, lick the dust, make a no se like a dog, purge with hyssop, become like a wheel," or that we should "keep silence;" because he hath said, "the Lord

is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence:" or, "be still and know that I am God:" for it is also said, "Our God shall come, and not keep silence."

But notwithstanding these necessary checks which I have just made to misinterpretations, let no one imagine I am averse from the lively and sensible affections of true religion; I am a decided advocate for a religion, that is perceived and known by its feelings: and I doubt not, no part of the Scriptures, making due abatement for the metaphors, so clearly show the characteristic joy and gladness of christianity, the spirit of praise, fervour of prayer, and vehemence of devotion, than the psalms actually present. I wish to understand them too, as being a part of those "parables and dark sayings,"* which prophets and kings desired to see, and could not; and which were fulfilled in the apostle's time, and described, as I am willing to suppose, by St. Peter,† saying, "ye receive the salvation of your souls, by believing, (in him, who has just ascended) with joy unspeakable and full of glory;" "which sal-

* See *Psalms*, chap. lxxviii. † 1 Peter, i. chap.

vation the prophets have enquired into and searched diligently; who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, and unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto *us*, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you *with* the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things, too, the angels desire to look into." All these things I do verily believe are as much affirmed of psalms as of any part of the Bible: but the apostle also adds, a caution in adopting all their literal import, for he says, "wherefore, gird up (i. e. tie up, restrain) the loins of your mind, be sober, (i. e. according to reason) not fashioning (i. e. conforming) yourselves according to the former lusts (old time affections for extravagance, &c.) in your ignorance (for now you are to know better) but be ye holy in all manner of conversation, for the conversation (conduct) of your *fathers* was *vain*, i. e. idle, useless. They in general sung "the latter day glory that should be revealed," with pomp and glory—but understood it but little.

With these views, I expect and desire, christians to feel the love of God in their

hearts: that it will actually break forth too in public praises:—"Praise is comely for the upright," when made in a comely manner. So far, from desiring to hide our affections and feelings of actual happiness, I wish them so to be made known, by such as feel the spirit to do it right, that unbelievers, only by seeing the manner of them, may be convinced.* I feel persuaded, when they proceed from the spirit of truth, they cannot fail to convince bystanders and gainsayers. But to effect all this desired object, our proceedings must be different; and the great *desideratum*, in my opinion, lies in the absolutely indispensable restraints and governments, so positively enjoined by St. Paul. Has he not said, as from the spirit of God too, "let all things be done *decently* and *in order*—let all be done unto edifying, for God is not the author of *confusion*, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." Repress then, the enthusiastic notion, that

* From this cause no meeting is so convincing as a love feast, where each person gives a reason for the faith that is in him—and I wish they were more public.

grace comes so powerful to the saints, as not to be restrained within the limits of decency and order. Allow and urge too, that free agents may govern themselves—teach that holy men may restrain the spirit, so as to speak one by one; and until occasion offers, to hold their peace, although they have a spirit to speak; "for the spirits are subject to the prophets," i. e. preachers. Then we may expect to see, on many proper occasions, saints actually praising God in the great congregation; not with unintelligible shrieks, or violent jumpings, but as I have sometimes witnessed, by a short clear, and rapturous, declaration, in rational words, of the fulness of their joy and gladness. Such a person, even springing up and making his case known, would present such a countenance of truth, as would convince. If on the other hand, we see a person earnestly weeping and praying, under a sense of sin, yet visibly striving to observe Paul's *rules of restraint*, we should perceive, if we attended to them closely, that they were actually in affliction and grief. If afterwards we can see such a person delivered, and he shows his joy by expressing

in words his thankful state and happiness, he then acts to *edification*:—and the beholders say, God is in it of a truth. It is very remarkable, that grace on such occasions unseals the dumb tongues, and enables his saints to give him real praise before men. But to make all this edifying, men must show by words and actions, that they are actually *urged* and *supported* too, in all they do and say, by a spirit of wisdom. The most ignorant and unlettered, sometimes in this way, prove the preternatural wisdom best. But if on the other hand, there be no spirit of interpretation (i. e. of explanation) in some, "let them, however moved, keep *silence* in the church, and let them speak to themselves and to God," to the end, "that all may learn, and all may be comforted." Finally, says St. Paul, "if any man think himself spiritual, let him acknowledge that these things are the commandments of the Lord!" But "if ye observe not these things, and there come in those that are untaught, will they not say ye are *mad!*" meaning thereby, that they would be justified in thinking so;—and we be justly shamed "by those *who are with-*

out." By such scriptural restraints, we should hope to repress *hypocrisy;* for now, those that have only *lungs* and *action,* can appear as saints: but if they had "to give a reason for their faith," to every extra action, they would very soon betray their spirit.

That many of old time could not possibly know the sense of many things they heard, and yet were excited to commemorate, we may learn from such prophecies as these—thus: *Zach.* ix. 9. "rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion; shout, O! daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy king cometh to thee, &c."—and in Isaiah xii. 6, "*Cry out and shout,* for great is the holy one in the midst of thee." Now these prophetic verses, were verified, in that "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice: and because the Pharisees rebuked him, Jesus said, if these should hold their peace, the stones would cry out," *Luke* xix. 37. Now even this last, is not commanded as an example, but is given as the fact: the fact had to be, because it was predicted in its general circumstances. Many may then have *shouted,* as they were accus-

tomed to do in other processions and triumphal entries:—all Israel shouted (30,000) when David led up the ark;—but all Israel was never all holy. They were wont to shout for a king in the camp—they shouted in the battle array—they shouted equally in false worship: the people, when they heard the wicked Herod, "gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a God and not of a man!" they all shouted when they had made them a golden calf! so too, the people of Lycaonia, said of Paul and Barnabas, "*lifting up their voices*, the gods have come down to us!"* Finally, we are

* It ought to be observed by those who contend for *shouting* in a literal *sense*, that the term itself, conveys us no sense of the triumphant words which any given *shout* expressed; and therefore, it is not perceived how the scriptures can be said to be imitated by them. For instance, the "shout of a king," was probably, "God save the king!" Among ourselves, we perceive, that when we speak of one who "shouted greatly," we are not thereby informed what sentiment his shout comprised. Such a shout, as with which the angels saluted the shepherds, was indeed a welcome, shout—"Peace on earth and good will to men!"—But that some of our *empty noise*,

at least sure, from the sequel, that many of those who rejoiced at Christ's entry into Jerusalem, knew him only as their temporal prince and deliverer, and soon afterwards cried, Crucify him, crucify him. The most that Jesus intimates is, that their sensibilities were real; and even this he speaks in terms of *hyperbole*, I suppose.

On the other hand, *troubles* in scripture are expressed some what thus: "Gird yourselves and lament, ye priests; howl ye ministers of the altar, for the offerings is withholden from the house of your God." Now what minister does *howl* because his people neglect his preaching, and the house of God?—Another says, "cast dust upon thy head," another prophet says,

---

which has been cheered as shouting, is any thing like commended scripture—shouting, "is what demands a doubt." The term shout, occurs but once in the whole christian dispensation of the bible, and that was the sinful shout of Herod's audience. Dr. Clarke, has satisfactorily shewn, that the *shout*, mentioned, 1 Thess. iv. 16. should have been translated *a command*—of arise ye dead! uttered like the voice of an archangel and the sound of a trumpet.

"*sigh*, oh! son of man, with the *breaking of thy loins*, because of the evil that shall come upon thee:" David says, "I am poured out like water, and my bones are out of joint—and my heart is melted in my bowels."

Thus have I shown, the general impassioned manner of ancient expressions and gestures, both by showing how they ordinarily *rejoiced*, and how they *mourned*. But I have seen some persons, again and again, quote such scriptures as are last mentioned, as exemplifying rules for our convictions! what distortion of the contexts! *Joel* i. 11. 13, is manifestly predicting the coming fate of Jerusalem, and speaks of the necessary discontinuance of the usual altar-services,—and the "breaking of the loins," is to be caused by "the tidings," of a great army, which was to subdue them. When we see men thus willing to deceive themselves, it is scarcely possible they should fail to mislead others!—

I will now proceed to redeem my promise, to consider such of the old Testament passages in detail, as are supposed to bear upon the religious exercises in question.

Isaiah, lxii. 6, 7. "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, oh! Zion, which shall never hold their peace day or night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make *Jerusalem* a praise in the earth."

Now all this is highly figurative prophecy, and so much so, that its import, except as we can develope it by its supposed likeness to subsequent events, is no more intelligible, than the Revelations. Osterwald says, "the prophet here speaks in the person of the Messiah; and declares, that *he* will never cease interceding with God, till the redemption of Israel." Some of the Methodists, say these are their ministers! It may first relate to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, when the watchmen actually worked at, and defended the walls from the enemy. It may too invite the then priests to call steadfastly on the Lord, till he actually re-establishes the walls and the great Temple: and if the prophecy be double, it may prefigure the diligence and vigilance of the apostles, that should come in the gospel. The Universalists urge, that the whole chapter pleads for the entire restoration of Israel, and then

the land shall be called Bulah. All these things was a *vision* of Isaiah, before the captivity by Nebuchadnezzar.

Ezekiel, xxi. 6, 7. "Sigh, therefore, thou son of man, (i. e. the prophet) with the breaking of thy loins, and with bitterness sigh before their eyes:—And it shall be when they say, wherefore sighest thou? that thou shalt answer,—for the tidings; because it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit faint, and all knees shall be weak as water: behold! it shall be brought to pass."

I have already cursorily referred to the above scripture, but it seems to require some further notice in this place, because the words as they stand, have been so very characteristic of some people's notions of religious emotion now a days, that they have again and again been pressed into the service of such. But this whole text, if referred to the context, is very plainly told to be of quite another import; and although expressed under terms extremely *hyperbolical,* clearly enough informs us, that Jerusalem shall soon experience the desolations

of *war*. Ezekiel was actually writing to his fellow captives in Babylon, to reconcile them still to abide there, and not to desire, as they were wont to do, to join their kindred in Jerusalem; "because of the tidings," which he prophetically foresaw was again to befall that city. He therefore goes on to tell the "*land* of Israel," that God says, "I am against thee, and will draw forth my sheath, and will cut off from thee, the *righteous* (mark this!) and the wicked." Say, a "*sword*, a *sword* is sharpened." In short, the *sword* is the *key-word* to the whole of the preceding violent affections of the body!

Ezekiel xxxiii. "Son of man (i. e. the prophet) speak to the children of Israel and say, when I bring the sword upon the *land*, if they take four men of the coast, and set them for their watchmen; if when he seeth the sword coming, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people,—then he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul—he that doth not, his blood shall be upon his own head, &c. I have set thee as a watchman, therefore, thou shalt warn, &c."

Here, under the figure of a watchman, who

usually gave alarm by the blowing of his trumpet, Ezekiel is admonished of his duty as a watchman to Jerusalem, whose city (see verse 21) is just then "smitten." But so far from its teaching gospel ministers, to *blow* their *lungs like* a *trumpet*, as some have inculcated, the context expressly shows, it was used as a sign of warning; and the real manner intended was by speaking—"So thou son of man, thou shalt "*speak* to warn," and thou shalt "speak," and "say, unto the house of Israel, &c." See ver. 7 and 10. When we read in Joel ii. "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain," if we judge of it by its context, we perceive it is to proclaim to Jerusalem, that the predicted army is at hand: "a great people and strong, with fire before and behind them, and his camp very great." In Hozea, v. 8. we read, "blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud at Beth-aven, after thee, O! Benjamin:" and this still predicts the destruction of Israel; and he adds, "I have made known among the tribes (of which Benjamin was one) that which shall surely be." Both Hozea and Joel,

have been used, to justify boisterous preaching!

In Jeremiah's Lamentations, chap. ii. 18, 20, we read, "let *tears* run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest—cry out in the night—pour out their heart like water:" Why all these great afflictions? the context adds, "for the *life of thy young children* that faint for hunger, when the women eat their fruit of a span long, and the young and the old lie on the ground (dead) in the streets." The whole of the prophet's Lamentations is a *poem*, and is wrote in the most pathetic stile, of soft and melancholy verse. His theme, like the others, is the calamities of his desolate country: but, all the first clause of this quotation, has been used as specially describing the anguish of sinners!

Jeremiah xxiii. 9. Says, "mine heart within me is broken, because of the prophets; all my bones shake—I am like a drunken man." This is not awakenings at the preaching of ministers, as has been said: Oh, no! It is because, "both prophet and priest is profane;" because, "I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria."

Job xxiv. 12. Says, "men *groan* from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out; yet God layeth not folly to them:" This has been quoted to advocate groaning! Now behold what a distortion! Job is actually representing the wickedness of the people, and that they go *unpunished;* and he is so grieved at this last, that he ventures to declare, that "God layeth not folly to them," because he suffers them to live, although they have wounded and afflicted the bodies of their fellow men, even to their groaning!—

"Cry and howl, son of man," Ezekiel xxi. 12. are words which have been quoted, to justify excessive religious concerns; but the command, is to the prophet himself; and besides, it is again, because of the *sword;* for it adds, "smite upon thy thigh, for it shall be upon my people; it shall be upon all the princes of Israel—terrors by reason of the sword."

Ezekiel vi. 11. says. "Thus saith the Lord, *smite* with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, alas! for all the evil abominations of Israel." The first clause of this, has been quite a hackneyed quota-

tion, for making noisy *smitings* and *stampings* popular. Now, if this means, that they were actually to be done, it was to have been done by Ezekiel himself; for the words are *thine* hand and foot: But *he* did neither of them, nor did he ever speak the words to any one. The whole was his vision by the river Chebar; and the terms at most are the imagery, for enforcing attention. We could easily have adduced other instances of perversion, but we consider the preceding as sufficient.

That God in his mysterious œconomy of grace, may have been pleased to propose the consideration of his will under dark sayings and parables, we do not pretend to dispute. He may intend to convey many lessons of wisdom under a cloud of imagery; but that we should countenance the garblings of *scraps,* picked here and there from a bible dictionary, (for they have in general no more connexion with the things they are brought to prove, than such random gatherings could produce)* is what we hope no sober christian

* In this way, even the words of the wicked Festus were introduced, because he chanced to speak with "a *loud voice!*" as well might they prove "there is no God," because "the fool" said it.

will ever consent to give his support to. To judge justly and honestly of hyperbolical words, we should surely be content to consider them as God intended them: and where shall we find that sense, but in the general tenor of the whole passage.

But if we would contemplate real passionate emotions, warranted by the accompanying facts, let us consider such as these: When Daniel saw the vision, the men that were with him saw not the vision: but a great quaking fell upon them—Dan. x. 7. As Paul was going to Damascus, suddenly there shined a light from heaven, and he *fell* to the ground; and he trembling, and astonished, said "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do."—Acts ix. 4. "For fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men."—Mat. xxviii. "As soon then as he (Jesus) had said, I am he, they fell to the ground."—John. xviii. 6. Such passages as the preceding, we are aware, have been adduced, as amply justifying almost every excess which we have been accustomed to see among us: for who is he, to resist such *power!* But what are the facts when calmly considered! In every case they are abso-

lute miracles; and intended too, in each case, to seal to the end of the world, the memory of the most eventful things. In the case too of Paul, the highest exertion of power seemed necessary; for Paul had had frequent access to many of the most faithful, and exemplary christian martyrs, without avail. Can it then be a candid and just inference, to apply such extraordinary operations, to the daily ordinary conversions in our chapels? But, says a caviller, every conversion is a miracle, because, all God's acts are miracles. No logician, we know, would dare to prove this by syllogism—and all men of sense will agree, that to confound God's ordinary operations of nature and grace, with his special exertions of power, is to confound all distinctions and discriminations, in language and things; which cannot be admitted. For St. Paul himself hath consecrated the distinction, by saying, "God hath wrought this *special* miracle." Yet, that several persons in our day, have, under the sense of deep conviction and earnest prayers for mercy, fallen, unconscious or careless from their knees to the floor, when the happiness of deliverance has come, I most cordially believe and rejoice in too.

Nehemiah and Ezra, give a case, more apparently like some of our more moving meetings, than any thing else I know of. Ezra iii. 11. Says, "and they sang together, and all *shouted* with a great shout, when they praised the Lord: but many wept with a loud voice, so that the people could not discern the noise of the joy, from the weeping." "That day, God made them rejoice with great joy, so that the joy was heard afar off."—Neh. xii. 43. In the preceding, we behold a plain detail of facts: the people really rejoiced and wept. But we are no where told to follow it as an example. We are to consider, that a whole nation were here met together in the open air, to celebrate their restoration to the most signal, national benefits; and what they did, they had to do loud, and by concert. Shouting too, was a ceremony of gladness: they were returned from captivity—they wept and rejoiced for gladness, to behold again their native land: and some old men wept from grief, because the *new* temple was inferior to the old. "All," could scarely have been truly good persons, and all could not have felt from sensations of piety; but

all could be very thankful for the recovered blessings; (they had found the lost Law also) and as all were a people of lively emotions, and the softening influence of God's spirit was perhaps peculiarly present, they all felt their hearts softened, and all were very glad.

If the preceding were indeed rules for our worship, then we should with equal propriety, follow the other part of their acts. In the case told by Nehemiah—the priests and Levites, were previously sought out to make thanks: and before beginning, they were placed into two companies—this was *their business*, they sang also and sacrificed and used trumpets and cymbals. To imitate them too, we should eat, drink, and be merry: "mourn not (said the Levites, for even then it seems they ought to have desisted,) nor weep: for all the people wept when they heard the word of the law. Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions—neither be sorry, for the Lord is your strength: and all the people (observe how readily their passions subsided,) went their way to eat, and to drink, and make great mirth." Neh. viii. 10, 12.

How this passionate people actually loved Jerusalem as a place, may be seen in their mournful and pathetic declaration in Babylon. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. If we forget thee, O! Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning, (i. e. how to work and get bread) if I prefer thee not above my chief joy."

To judge soberly of all such passionate emotions, and hyperbolical words as we have been considering in the preceding pages, we ought rather to see how the apostles acted from such examples. They are our best guides. Or we ought rather to look, if we will prefer the old Testament rules, to such writers, (and there are many) whose sense is clear and without parables. Or if we would affect to obey literally, their highly figurative expressions, we should be brought to consider how many of them are quite impracticable. "They should *run* like mighty men," they should *howl*—rend their *hearts*, and their *garments*—*wallow* themselves in the *ashes*—pour dust upon their heads—praise him in the *dance*, and with *timbrels* and *harps*, pour out their *liver*,

break their *teeth* with *gravel stones*—divide their tongues—lick the dust—make them like a wheel, &c. &c. for all these things were commanded by the prophets. And what can we make of this, viz. "all they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship?"

The prophet Joel, has furnished so many texts, for those who most delight in encouraging excessive emotions, that it may perhaps be useful to give a more extended review of his prophecy. The two first chapters, they suppose, abound in lively descriptions of God's *awakening and convicting* power, and the condition of unconverted priests, and neglected congregations. But it is nevertheless clear, from his own declarations therein, that he is actually foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, by the *northern army* from Babylon; and his *imagery* thereof, while it proves the elevation of *oriental metaphor* in general, is in fact, his picture of a *present calamity*, then experienced, in the ravages of an army of locusts. The locusts and the canker worm, says he, hath eaten the vine; and the field and the corn, and the wheat and the barley, is wasted;

the wine and the oil is dried up; and the land mourneth :—therefore, he exclaims, "Awake ye drunkards and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, for it is cut off from your mouth!" Surely he did not care for the drunkards: but he expresses the fact of their deprivation. And because that the earth was desolate, and could not yield its accustomed offerings of its fruits to the Lord, he says, "be ashamed, (i. e. confused) O! ye husbandmen; howl, O! ye vine-dressers, for the wheat and the barley; gird yourselves and lament, ye priests; howl ye ministers *of my God*, because the harvest of the field is perished, and the offerings are (therefore) withholden from the house of your God." The whole first chaper is occupied with a similar description of their distress. The second chapter begins with, "blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; (meaning Jerusalem) let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord cometh:" (meaning the scourge of an army.) He then compares the army to come, and its devastations, with that which they then witnessed from the locusts: and at the 12th verse, he exhorts

them *to repentance*, as the only means to avert their judgments; so that the Lord may be jealous for his land, and pity his people. He says, therefore, "turn ye with fasting, weeping and mourning, and rend your heart and not your garment:—Gather, therefore, the people, let the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar; and let them say, spare thy people, and give not thy heritage to the heathen:"—Finally, to comfort them, he says, "rejoice in the Lord; (for) your floors shall be full; and I will *restore to you* the years, that the *locust* and the canker-worm, and the caterpillar hath eaten; *my great army* which I sent you of them.

More could be added from Joel, but the above, is a specimen of the whole: and several of our brethren, I doubt not, will remember the persons of some, who kept them from the real conception of the subject.

Malachi, chapter ii. 1, 2, says, "O ye priest, if ye will not lay it to heart, *to give glory* to my name, I will even send a curse upon you." This has been adduced as a *call*, to cry out, *glory! glory!* as some do. Without here opposing *the thing* itself, it

is proper to say, it means no such thing in this place. But it meant that the priests did not glorify God in their acts, but "profaned mine altar," and therefore, "they are cursed." Similar to this is the passage in Isaiah, xxix. 9, "stay yourselves and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink:" but the whole reason of this, is, that an army is sent against them: for the context says, "I will raise *forts* against thee, and thou shalt be brought down; I will distress thee, (as a nation) and thou shalt be in heaviness and sorrow."

The writer is not aware, that there are any other passages in the *old* testament, bearing upon the present subject, which could not be explained in unity with the present views. To adduce more cases, would probably be needless—and would certainly burden both the book and the reader. If he has misapprehended any passages, or unwarily perverted any, "let him, that is without sin herein, cast the first stone!"

Some of our brethren, we know, in their zeal for noisy meetings, so called, are some-

times prone to bring every kind of scriptural expression, into some kind *of action*. To illustrate this idea, consider some of the like sentences, to wit: "Give unto the Lord, *the glory* (i. e. praise) due to his name—bless (i. e. praise) the Lord, oh! my soul. My soul shall make *her* boast in the Lord,—rejoice in the Lord,—extol his name,—make his wonder known, &c:" with such persons exhortations like these are always desired to be fulfilled with loud ejaculations and strong emotions;—yet it is nevertheless the fact, that every one of them *could have been* executed without *utterance* or *action*. The *soul* may have done all those things, by itself and in silence. We *could* muse, or write, or speak his praise. Without attempting to determine, what is in itself uncertain, I only mean to say, *we beg the question*, in drawing absolute rules from such vague data. I suppose they express things done, both publicly and privately; sometimes by the silent voice of the *soul*, and sometimes by mouth; and certainly by writing; and by music and singing.

Some have referred to the tokens of worship in heaven, because it abounds with in-

stances of loud and strong worship. "And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round the throne, saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb—and the beasts said *amen*,"—Revelation v. 11. "And they rest not day and night, saying, holy, holy holy," Revelation iv. 8. All agree that the revelations are mysterious and hidden; and we may be excused, I think, if with Dr. Clarke, we frankly confess "we *do not understand them*." But we are constrained to think it must be different from *our worship*, since *beasts* and *birds* there, have so much to exhibit in it. Besides, we expect that any worship designed for the *ears* of an *innumerable* company, must be loud to our senses. Who could *bear* the *voices* of seven *thunders!*

Having thus gone through the proposed review of *old* Testament citations, and having shown as we went along, how garbled and partial many quotations have been made, to uphold an illusory theory, I come now in the course of my plan, to consider that "more perfect way," revealed in the gospels: and let us rather look to the effect which the first preaching of our Lord produced.

CHAPTER IV.

It is intended to notice here, the power and influence of religion, as spoken of in the gospels, *before* the ascension of our Lord, and the descent of the Holy Ghost.

IN preparing for the consideration of this chapter, I have endeavoured to *seek into* the import and effect of *all those occurrences*, recorded by the four evangelists, without any design to avoid any point which might seem to bear against me. I wish my reader might be disposed to give them his careful perusal, with the same candid views: to seek truth only. It will soon be perceived by such, that men *hear* and *believe* the words of Christ, without any powerful emotions. It might even surprise a mind imbued with such high notions of *power*, as has been expressed in the old Testament, and as has been seen even by ourselves in our own day. Let the reader observe the manner and character of the following citations, to wit: "Mat. iv. 17, from that time Jesus *began* to preach, and to say, Repent.—Seeing Simon and Andrew, he saith unto them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of

men: and straightway they left their nets and followed him."—And again, "he saw James and John, and he *called* them, and they immediately left their ship and followed him."—"And they brought unto him all sick people, &c. and he healed them."—And *he* seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain, and his disciples came unto him, and he taught them, saying, "blessed are the poor in spirit," &c. The effect of this great sermon of three entire chapters, Mat. v. to vii. is, that "when he had ended these sayings," the people were *astonished* at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority. See also other whole chapters of his sermons, xiii. xviii. xx. and xxii. of Mathew. Thus *they* heard *him* "who spake as never *man* spake!" No excessive emotions among his hearers, and no effort in him to produce it. He sows the words of truth, and leaves them to grow, or not. There is indeed a beautiful and rare instance of tender penitence, in Mary, who washed his feet with her tears, and *anointed* him with precious ointment:—and our Lord himself, seemed to regard it as a special case, intended to memorialize his burial with *tears;* for he says, "her act shall be spoken

of as a *memorial* throughout the whole world." This extra act, seems to have affinity with the *extra* acts used by the populace, in his *kingly* triumphant entry into Jerusalem :—one memorializes his *victory*, the other his death. He proceeds to heal the leper—to heal the Centurian's servant,—the mother of Peter—the sick of the palsy, &c. The two first show no religious fervour. Peter's mother, arises and serves him ; and the palsied man "arose and went to his own house." "And the multitude *marvelled* and glorified *God*, which had given such power unto *men*," was the most that was done. By the word *glorified*, in this place, we can only understand, that they *ascribed*, or *assigned* the acts, as belonging to *the glory of* God, and not of "man." When he next sends out the *twelve*, he says, "go preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand :" no strange emotions are predicted as the effect of their preaching, although he tells what effects they should see. Mathew xv. 30. "The multitude *wondered* when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see : and they *glorified* the *God of Israel*."

These are the strongest expressions of emotion, even from the preaching of Christ himself! Two lepers, indeed, "*cried out*, have mercy (i. e. pity) on us, O! Lord, thou *son* of David:" but when he stood still, and said, "what will ye, that I shall do unto you?" they say, "Lord, that our *eyes* may be opened:" they think not of their *hearts!* In this case they were obliged to *cry out*, to be heard, for a "great multitude followed him." When restored, all they did was to follow him.

Perhaps as strong a case of religious affection, as could have occurred, was the Lord's supper, *Mathew* xxvi. 26 to 30. Nothing however is particularly mentioned, save that after *hearing* him: "they sung an hymn and went out." Indeed, in all his preaching and miracles, they appear always to have acted only as hearers and observers. No religious fervour appears in any case. The only case like it, is, when the multitudes (as he went up to Jerusalem) cried, saying, "hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, hosanna (i. e. praise) in the highest." See *Math.* xxi. 8, 9. *Mark*, xi. 9, 10,—and

Luke xix. 37, 38.—The Pharisees said, "master, rebuke thy disciples," he answered, "if these should hold their peace, the *stones* would cry out." *Disciples* here means, *all* the *followers*—see Mathew, who says, "the multitudes—great multitudes—and *all the* city was moved." These acts were all offered to him as a *king*, a temporal deliverer from the Roman yoke: and the whole *acts* were *necessary* to fulfil a *prophecy*, which said, "behold thy king cometh, sitting upon an ass." It was the *passing* act of a marching populace: and could not have been religious devotion, other than as they regarded him as a gift *from* God; for these very people, *soon after* cried out, "crucify him, crucify him—away with such a fellow from the earth." Consider too, *all* their actions:—"they spread their garments in the way: and others cut branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way." Our Lord himself, when questioned respecting these *cries*, referred them to the *prophecy*: "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected *praise*." In another place, he says, "I come to *fulfil*, that not one jot or tittle may be broken." These

men seem to have rejoiced, as having a great temporal deliverer :—they had been expecting one; they neither sang nor prayed, but they went up to the temple, as bands, in triumph. It is not insinuated that we should imitate them ;—in fact, we cannot, in spreading our garments, and strewing our floors of worship with branches. But we have Christ's opinion of the *effect* of his ministry in his answer to John's messengers :—" Go shew John again those things, which ye do *hear* and *see*: viz. the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them." On such a proper occasion, he infers no proof from the *visible* power of religion on the heart, by any *outward signs* which the incipients *manifested*. If we behold the man who was born blind; Lazarus raised from the dead; and other miracles wrought; we see the incipient, in one case, " went his way," and the other is " let go ;" and in such conspicuous favours, we see no other expressions at most, than that they worshiped him; i. e. made him homage. How shall we then regard such *triumphant* language, as, in the entry into Jerusalem, other, than as

the shouts and acclamations of the populace, when beholding any king? The same multitude, even at the *same time*, called him only a prophet, "the prophet of Nazareth," *Mathew* xxi. 11. They did not worship, or reverence him as *God;* therefore, *they* do not present *us* any rule of devotion. They praised *God* indeed, for sending them "a *king* in the name of the Lord." But as Christ well knew the *prophecies* concerning this very *entrance* must be all fulfilled, he said truly, the *praise* was so essential to the *character* of the entrance, that if *they* should have desisted, the *stones* would have been compelled to sound his *praise;* meaning by this *hyperbole* of expression, that it was *impossible* it should be otherwise: "for the Lord by the mouth of his prophet had spoken it!" "not one jot or tittle *could* be broken!"

Having now exhibited *all* that Christ *said* and *taught*, as told in the four gospels, we will now proceed to the "*Acts* of the Apostles;" and by seeing their *actions*, their preaching, and their examples of worship, we shall discern how the holy Ghost, the Comforter, himself *affected* them, and their

hearers; and thus we shall learn *all* that the word of God has left us upon this matter. If we will but be *content* to make this our *rule* and *guide*, we may not fear to *err* much.

"The *simplicity* of the primitive christian worship, (says Dr. Clarke) is worthy of *particular* notice and admiration. Here (in the Acts) are no *apparatus* to impress the senses, and produce emotions in the *animal* system, "to help the spirit of devotion," as has been foolishly said; but, in the acts, we find the true *model* after which every church *should* be builded."

CHAPTER V.

It will now be endeavoured to examine the deportment, character and habits of christians, *after* the ascension; and when the Spirit, the Comforter, actually influenced the hearts and lives of the first christians: and by *their example*, I shall contend *we* ought now to be influenced and *regulated.*

From a careful perusal of the whole new Testament, *after* the ascension, we can, I think, boldly challenge any sober reader, or candid critic, to produce even a solitary instance of screaming, jumping up and down in the same place, (when not walking, I mean) or shouting, in any meeting assembled for religious worship. On the contrary, the quiet attention, and the inculcation of "*sobriety, gravity, decency,* and *order,*" and *acting* to edification, is very remarkably enjoined. Even St. Paul, when he had preached till midnight, had such *still attention,* that a young man actually fell *asleep,* and fell from the window of a three story. Only let any candid inquirer, with a view to this object, begin with the Acts, and read

the Epistles quite through to Revelations, and he cannot fail to be persuaded of the truth of my assertion.

Being fully persuaded, that in the promulgation of the gospel, *we* have "a more glorious dispensation," than ever they possessed under the law, I shall endeavour to be very minute in searching from its examples, for all our rules of godliness. It amply instructs both preachers and people. I shall therefore endeavour to analyze the whole, by classing under several heads of arrangement, all which had been said, taught, or done, for our instruction or fulfilment. I shall therefore notice:—first, the extent of their rules: second, the speeches, teachings and sayings of the Apostles, for all our religious instruction: third, its *effect* on the hearers and first christians, and their opinion of their own exercises:—fourth, the opinions found of the first christians by their enemies; and of what things they accused them:—fifth, evidences of the manners and habits of the first christians, and of their strict observance of the rules of decency and order, and of *their restraints of the spirit.*

First then, all necessary rules of holy living have been communicated—as is proved by the following citations:—viz.

Acts i. 1, "This treatise have I made of *all* that Jesus began both to *do* and to *teach*."

Acts i. 3, "And Jesus, speaking *of the things* pertaining to the kingdom of God."

Acts xx. 20, Paul at Ephesus, before the elders, said "ye know, how that I *kept back nothing* that was *profitable* unto you, but have shewed you, and taught you publicly, repentance toward God, and faith toward Jesus Christ."

Acts xx. 27, "For I have not *shunned* to declare unto you the *whole* counsel of God." And in verse 35—"I have *shewed* you *all* things." We therefore, perceive from the foregoing citations, that nothing, which could be *profitable* for us has been withheld. *Our rule of faith* (the discipline) also confirms this. Second, the speeches, teachings and sayings of the Apostles for *all* our *religious instruction* and conduct.

The first general meeting of christians, after the ascension, is described in the Acts i. 14. viz. "these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." The next

was on the day of Pentecost, chapter ii. "They were all of one accord (i. e. by appointment) in one place, and *suddenly* there came a rushing mighty *wind* from heaven, and filled all the house where they were sitting, and cloven tongues, as of fire, sat upon each of them, and they were all *filled* with the Holy Ghost. Now observe the effect of the *miracle:* none scream, nor shout, nor jump, but "they began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance." Here the power was extraordinary! *We* have no gift of *tongues*—neither doth the *spirit make* us suddenly do any act of speech, especially in unknown languages, for its purposes—it were idle to attempt to use such a case for our precedent. Was it not "a most notable miracle" indeed, to commemorate, the divine mission of the first Apostles and disciples to the end of time! How appropriate too, the manner of the miracle; *tongues* rested upon their heads; to show by what power they were to speak with tongues; and being *cloven*, showed the *plurality* of languages by which they were to persuade and convince! What was the effect of all this—the beholders "were all amazed," and said, What meaneth

this ! And some were silly enough to say they were drunken—some of such may not have been near enough to hear if any sense were uttered. But all these wonderful things, so far from producing extravagance of emotion, or making Peter turbulent, makes him wise enough forth with, to stand up and deliver a long and edifying sermon.—In all this, there was no screaming, nor shouting, nor jumping.* His effort was to *explain* it,

---

* "In all this then was no screaming, jumping, nor shouting!" as expressions like this, must hereafter often occur in the following remarks, I wish now to premise this *general declaration* respecting *them*. I have not the remotest aim at arrogance or triumph thereby. I feel too sober and too solicitious to do some good, to indulge in any intemperance of expression knowingly. But I consider that many *quotations* would be lost upon the ordinary reader, if not occasionally *aroused* in this manner, to consider by a seeming challenge, whether in that case any of these *emotions* under such fair opportunities, did or did not exist. In this manner too, I suppose, I avoid much circumlocution and repetition of arguments. I hope therefore none will allow themselves to be offended by any similar remarks. But let us cheerfully inquire after *truth*, and obey *it* in the love of it.

and to ascribe it to the power of Jesus, whom they slew: "*He* hath shed forth this which you see!" and when they had heard this, considering how ill they had used the God of such power, "they were pricked to the heart," and said, What shall we do—this was *their* feeings. He exhorting them said, "Repent, and be baptised; then they that gladly received his word (the way of repentance) and were baptised, were about 3000."

In this great assemblage of people (for 3000 were only part,) no confusion occurred, all was heard and all was intelligible: and behold how they lived afterwards, "they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in *prayers;* and daily they met in the temple, and did eat their meat with gladness of heart," (mark how minute things are told, as though *we* should miss nothing) praising God, (thanking him) and having favour with *all* the people." Now here we have an entire picture, of the original deportment of a great religious meeting, even in the very instance of their first and *miraculous* blessing. How carefully is the whole expounded to the understanding of bystan-

ders: that they might be had *in favour* of all the people.

In Acts iii. 12, Peter makes a speech of 14 verses—saying, "why marvel, ye at this, as though by our power we had made this man walk:" he endeavours straightway to expound what they *see*. Acts iv. 8, Peter begins a speech of 12 verses, thus: "then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers and elders, if we be examined this day of the good deed done to the impotent man:" Mark how he labours to explain it. Acts v. 12, "And by the hands of the *Apostles* were many signs and wonders wrought *among* the people, and believers were the more added to the Lord: multitudes of men and women—and them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one." Acts chap. vii, Stephen when stoned made a speech of 60 verses—beginning thus: "men and brethren hearken: ye do always resist the Holy Ghost," (verse 55:) "But he being full of the Holy Ghost, (mark when he is *full*, he does not any of our violent acts,) looked up steadfastly into heaven, and *saw* the glory of God:" does he scream! no, he says, "behold I see the

son of man :" how very composed and intelligent is his whole speech.

Acts ix. 4. 6, Tells the conversion of St. Paul—" he fell to the earth, and trembling and astonished, he said, Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" Consider the sudden light from heaven—that he was three days without sight, and without eating or drinking; and that scales actually fell from *off* his eyes. May we liken ours to his? No—his was a " special" miracle, but mark how *rational* he was under it all. He at once says, " Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (verse 21,) " and all who heard him were amazed."

Acts x. 35, Peter (in eight verses) preaches to the family of Cornelius the centurian—he offers an explanation of his doctrines. Acts xi. Peter preaches (in eighteen verses,) to explain to the Apostles, the act of the spirit respecting the same Cornelius : all is calm and peaceful.

Acts xi. 23. 24, Barnabas, who " was *full* of the Holy Ghost and of faith, came to Antioch, and saw the grace of God—he was *glad*:" he showed no violent emotions, though so *full*, but " exhorted them all to cleave unto God."

Acts xiii. 14. 16, Paul and Barnabas, visit the synagogue at Antioch, and after hearing the law and the Prophets, and being urged by the rulers to give any word of exhortation, "Paul stood up and said, Give *audience*:" and he *expounds* in fourteen verses. "And when the Gentiles, (verse 48) heard the tidings for *them*, they were glad, and glorified (i. e. praised) the word of the Lord:" and the disciples (verse 52) were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost; but no strange signs are told! Acts xvi. 13, Paul at Philippi, "went out of the city by the river side, where prayer was wont to be made: and we *sat* down and spake unto the women which resorted thither; and the heart of Lydia was opened:" no *manner* of it is told.

Acts xvi. 25, Paul and Silas when in prison, expressed their love to God, by "singing praises:" no shouting or screaming! Acts xix. 11, "And God wrought *special* miracles by the hands of Paul, so that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases went from them." No other effects are told.

See in connexion with the preceding, three distinguished speeches of Paul: chap. xxii. Acts to the Jews—23rd to the council, and 24th to the governor. In each case, all he does, is to deliver a plain detail of scripture truth, he urges no emotions from the power of religion.

Finally, some were called Boanarges, *sons of thunder*, i. e. *alarmers;* in contradistinction to *consolers.* But even these *alarmers* have left no examples of screaming, &c.

If the reader has been at the pains, in the preceding examination, to look into the several speeches referred to, he must have been struck, with their uniform character of moderation and forbearance; they never strive to exaggerate evils, (they say little of hell fire,) nor do they ever use (as we do now) old Testament inflammatory words to excite their hearers. They seem steadily to act as husbandmen, who sow their seed, but leave the event calmly to God. "Paul may plant and Apollos water: but it is God who must give the increase." Although, too, they travel among the Heathen, and among the Jews of the Law, they never make any railing accusation against them.

They in fact seem to leave all in their own ways, who cannot be affected by the hearing of their truths. When I have heard some of our ministers, very careful to preach our better way, by declaiming against *their* forms, decrees, &c. I have thought, so did not St. Paul.* These men too, in all their communications are simple, unassuming and serene—they though Jews, follow not the habits of the old Jews, by rending their garments or defiling their heads with dust. Mark too, how wonderfully simple in the arrangement of their sermons—in fact, there is not one *sermon* properly so called, in the whole new Testament—they are all exhortations—no dividing and subdividing among them. Whence have we our *forms*, but from the innovations of Rome and the

* My reader may here discern, how very far it is from my natural character, to be a *medlar*, or busybody in other men's religious concerns. I have hitherto lived without reproach in this matter, and *now* I interfere, with very great reluctance and concern. I may truly say with Cowper, "to a spirit formed like mine, public exhibition is mortal poison." May God, whom I wish to serve, bless this my endeavour to be useful!

schools of logic. I often think we should be much more edified, if we could hear more of God's word, and less of the speaker's: a *text*, is but a *morsel*, where we might have had the improvement in the same time of *an whole chapter*. Besides, it seems an idle waste of time, to be *methodically* proving by detail, all the propositions of the subject, when nine times out of ten, all that is sought for, would be cheerfully *pre*-conceded by the whole audience. We do not want texts explained, so much as we want their improvement, and the exhortation. This digression, on a subject which is worth some consideration, causes me to remember some pertinent remarks on preaching, by Dr. A. Clarke. "Beware (says he) of too much *dividing* and *subdividing*—how little of *this* do we see in the discourses of the Prophets or Apostles! apply every thing as you go along, and when *done*, learn to make an *end*. *I* have often preached only ten to fifteen minutes at a time, because I had no more to say: to continue longer, merely to fill up the time, is a shocking profanation: as to *matter*, preach Jesus,—his attonement,—his love to a lost world; and through

him, proclaim a full, free, and present salvation, and God will bless you wherever you go."

I come now in my appointed order, to speak of the EFFECTS *which the first preaching had on the hearers and first christians; and their opinion of their own exercises.*

Acts iii. 6. 8, The lame man whom Peter healed: "Peter said, *rise up and walk*, and he leaping up, *stood*, and *walked*, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God; and the beholders were filled with amazement." In this case, mark, he was *commanded* to rise up and use his limbs—so he jumped up, "*stood*," and then walked, and afterwards leaped. *Query*,—Would not any one of us, under like restoration of helpless limbs, have made a *lively use* of them, even without religious affection? But all we have occasion to remark here, is, that it was not *irresistible* grace, which made him leap: for he *stood* part of the time at least. The remainder of the time he had to move, because he was *going* on the *road* to the

temple; and he did it lively, because his heart was glad. His leaping, I suppose, was for his own gladness, and his "praise," was for God. Acts iv. 24, When their own company heard from Peter and John, how they had been treated, because of restoring the said lame man, "they lifted up their voices to God, with one accord, (how?) and said, Lord, thou art God:" &c.—making thence a *prayer* of six verses: and when they had prayed, (verse 31,) the *place* was *shaken* where they were assembled, and they were all *filled* with the Holy Ghost: (and what did they do then?) and they spake the word with boldness, "and with great power, (no screaming or jumping!) gave the Apostles witness, and great grace was upon them all."

Acts ix. 36. 40, "When Dorcas, who was full of good works, and alms deeds, was restored to life by Peter, she opened her eyes and *sat up*:" she made no leaping, &c.!

Acts x. 44, "While Peter yet spake, (in the Centurian's house,) the Holy Ghost fell on them all: (what did they do?) they were astonished—and he commanded them to be baptised."

Acts xiv. 10, Paul at Lystra, heals the man impotent of his feet, "and he leaped, and walked:"—He did not seem to worship at all.

Acts xv. 31, When the Apostles carried the Epistle to Antioch, and it was read, "they rejoiced for the consolation."

Acts xvi. 25, Paul and Silas, at Philippi, were imprisoned, "and at midnight they sang praises unto God, and suddenly there was an *earthquake*, and the doors opened, and every one's bands were loosed; (what a surprising power!) and the keeper fearing, would have *killed* himself: (no religion at this time!) but Paul cried, do thyself no harm: and he sprang in, (affected by the kindness of the words,) and came *trembling*, (because afraid still,) and fell down before Paul and Silas, (supposing the power only of them, and making them homage,) and said, Sirs, what must I do to be *saved*:" supposing destruction must await them all under such mighty "shakings of the foundation of the prison." But they, willing to avail themselves of so suitable an occasion to preach repentance, as the best means of *salvation*, take up his own word, and say, "believe

on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou* shalt be *saved,*" and *thy house.* *His* belief could not save his *household,* but they meant that belief unto salvation, should be equally possible for all of them. As yet, during all this time, he knew not the way of christian salvation: and if he did not, as I shall presently shew, how ill judged has been the zeal of those, who have pressed all this prison scene, as a case of absolute conviction for sin. *He* meant by all he did, present, temporal deliverance: but *they* meant to urge him to a concern for his soul: therefore, *after* all this, (verse 32,) they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in the house, "and then only it follows, (verse 33d,) that they were all *baptised,* and *then* shewed *kindness* to Paul and Silas, by *washing* their *stripes.*"

Acts xix. 6, Paul at Ephesus—and when Paul laid his hands on the Disciples there, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues.

Acts xx. 37, And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him; sorrowing most, that they should see his

face no more: how rational and affectionate their manner!

Acts xxviii. 15, Paul approaching Rome, sees the brethren coming to meet him, and was glad: how did he act? He thanked God and took courage.

Acts xxviii. 23, When Paul expounded in Rome, from morning till night, "persuading them," some believed and some not.

Having now gone through the preceding examinations of the effect of preaching, and of the Holy Spirit, on the hearts of the first christians and converts, we have been enabled to judge, in what manner their *bodies* were ordinarily affected; and we are compelled now to concede, that they did not jump, nor scream, nor shout, nor in any thing act unseemly: but acted with constant decorum, gravity and stability.*

---

* It occurs to me, in this place, that some one will say, If they have not told us of *their* leaping, they were however, *allowed* to do so by Christ himself in his sermon on the Mount. See Luke vi. 23: "Rejoice ye in that day, and *leap* for joy:"—but if this be compared with the more full detail of this same sermon, recorded by St. Mathew v. 12th, it is there *proved*, (as we have before observed,) that

I come now to show the opinions which were formed of the first christians, by their enemies; and what things they *laid to their charge as offences.*

In exhibiting the various charges, which will fall under this head, I wish my reader to be vigilant to discover, if he can, among all the accusations which their enemies could lay to them, any thing like screaming, shouting, or jumping.

Acts xvi. 20, Paul and Silas, before the magistrates at Philippi, are accused, that "they do exceedingly trouble our city—(why?) they *teach* customs not lawful for us to receive or observe."

Acts xvii. 7, Paul and Silas, at Thessalonica, are accused of "turning the world upside down, (figurative of course:) and doing contrary to Cæsar; saying, there is another king, one Jesus."

---

leaping is not only a figurative, but a *proverbial* expression, in John and others; and means, as St. Mathew understood it, "*exceeding glad*,"—and by no means, actual leaping: mark too, in this *same* sermon, Christ also bids them to *pluck out* the right eye; to *cut off* the right hand, &c.

Acts xvii. 18, Paul at Athens—"the philosophers said, What will this babbler say;—others, he is a setter forth of strange doctrine: and they said, May we know what this new *doctrine is*, and what these things *mean?*" And then Paul standing on Mars-hill, said, Ye men of Athens, &c. (speaking nine verses)—read it and see how rationally he defends his doctrine by the rules of right reason—his *acts* he supposed were not *peculiar* enough to merit any explanation, though it was included in the compass of their request, if any had existed.

Acts xviii. 13, The Jews at Achaia, said, "this fellow persuadeth men contrary to the law:" but Gallio acquits him, saying, "O! ye Jews, if it were a matter of *wrong*, or of wicked lewdness, I might act, but if it be a *question* of *words* and *names*, and of your law, look ye to it." Here he shows by his verdict, plain enough, it was his *doctrine*, and not at all the *actions* of the disciples, which *offended*.

Acts xix. 37, The town clerk at Ephesus, declared they were "neither robbers of churches, nor blasphemers;" insin-

uating thus: that there was nothing against their manners.

Acts xxi. 28, The Jews at Jerusalem—"cried out, men of Israel help! This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place:" here, although they even invented *lies*, they did not conceive any charge against their manners.

Acts xxiv. 19, Paul excusing himself before Felix—says, "I was found neither with multitude nor *tumult*, and let *these say* if they have found any evil *doing* in me." Thus he knew his *actions* were *unblamable*, even in *their* estimation.

Acts xxv. 26, Festus writeth respecting Paul—saying, "I have *no certain thing* to write respecting him; and it seemeth unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not to signify his crimes."

Acts xxvi. 2, I think myself happy, says Paul, that I shall answer before thee Agrippa, touching *all the things* whereof I am accused of the Jews." He then proceeds to a long defence, (of 32 verses,) but he makes no reference to any extravagant bodily exercises. Indeed, the lawyer who was em-

ployed to accuse, and whose whole *speech* to the judges is preserved, accuses the christians of none of these things. We infer then, that they were absolutely unknown in that day.

I proceed now, finally, to give evidence of the manners and habits of the first christians, and of their strict observance of rules of decency and order—even to imposing restraints upon the operations of the spirit.

1 Cor. ix. 9. 10, "Take heed, least by any means this *liberty* of yours become a *stumbling block* to them that are weak." (Oh, how considerate *then* for the feelings and views of others!) "But when ye *sin* so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye *sin* against Christ."—Do they indeed! And verse 13th adds: "*wherefore*, if meat make my brother to offend, (offended,) I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." What feeling, consideration, and gentle forbearance for *our* instruction and example!—Observe too, how it implies that *christians* may *restrain* their acts.

1 Cor. xi. 13, "Judge in yourselves, Is it *comely*, that a woman pray unto God *uncovered?* Also, it is a *shame* for a woman to be *shaven*, but (verse 15th says,) if she has *long* hair it is her glory."—A man indeed ought not to cover his head:—and again: (verse 14th,) "Doth not even *nature* itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him!" Mark here, how earnestly Paul pleads for the prescribed forms and usages of society:—he endeavours to *shame* them into *comeliness*, and such *taste* of personal decoration, as *nature* and custom prescribes. I wonder, if Paul could have endured complacently, the jumping and screaming of some of our "unstill *sisters!*"

1 Cor. xiv. 34, "Let your women keep *silence* in the churches, for it is *not permitted* unto them to *speak*, but they are *commanded* to be under *obedience*, as also saith the law." How unlike is this to the liberty of our sisters!—

But Paul in the 14th chap. 19th verse, is very remarkable—"In the *church* I had rather speak five words, with my understanding, that by my voice I might *teach others* also, than 10,000 words in an un-

known, (i. e. an unintelligible) tongue." Oh! how he aims in all things to *edify*. He would rather give an intelligible account of his state of soul, that *others* may learn, than to scream or shout, in an *unknown* manner or sound! For he says, (verse 7th,) "except they give a *distinction* in the sounds, how shall it be known what it is?" So likewise, (9th verse,) "except ye utter by the tongue, *words* easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? ye shall speak into the air!" (verse 12th,) "Let the *zealous* of spiritual gifts, *seek* to *excel* to the *edifying* the church." Thus this *edifying* we observe, is the *clymax* of his whole theme of instruction. But who is *edified* either by the jumping, or screaming, or shouting, or stepping of tunes! Nay, those kind of people, have been challenged in some cases to give some rational account of their emotions *in public;* but they have been too diffident or *ashamed*, although they thought nothing of either of the others before the congregation. Can such persons think themselves in a right spirit, who can resist such weighty *commands*, as these which St. Paul enjoins! Who hath made any of us *wiser* than the

Apostles? Finally, says the same apostle, (verse 15th,) "*I* will pray *with* the Spirit, and *I* will pray *with* the understanding also: I will sing too, with the Spirit, and with the understanding also:" that is, when he has the Spirit in him: he will also, while he *acts* with it, make it to be understood by, or accompanied with the understanding of others also: this is his obvious meaning. For, he adds, "*unless* these things be, those that are *unbelieving* will say, "ye are *mad*:" (how manifestly *he* cares for the opinion of *unbelievers*, but some of us make a merit of *their* derisions:) "But if otherwise, (says Paul,) "he is *convinced* of all; and will report that God is in you of a truth." As if Paul had said, so rule your spiritual exercises and subdue them, that they may always stand *explained* to their understandings by *your* words; that so you may *convince* the unbeliever, and cause him to "*report*," that you are not *mad*, but God is in you: "For God, he adds, is not the author of *confusion*, but of *peace*; as in all the churches of the saints, (verse 33d,) Let all things, therefore, be done *unto edifying*: (verse 27th,) Yea, (still increasing in his

energy of command,) let *all* things (omit nothing, however trivial,) be done decently, and in order." Is it possible, that any well wisher to Zion, of sober and stable principles of christianity, can, after reading such wise and solemn admonitions, countenance the loose disorder, and confusion of many of our meetings ?—Are we not, indeed, overleaping the bounds of apostolic wisdom ; and can we hope to escape the illusions of enthusiasm ?—May the Lord, indeed, touch the hearts of his servants, to purify his temple !

1 Tim. chapter iii.—A minister " must be *blameless*—sober, of good behaviour—one that ruleth well; and he must have a good report of those which *are without,* (must he indeed !) least he fall into *reproach.*" Here we perceive we are so to live, as to be without *blame* or *reproach,* even from the *world:* nay, more ; we must have a *good* report from them ; because of our *good behaviour,* even in *their* estimation. Nor, can this position be at all gainsayed, by the text: " rejoice, and be exceeding glad, when they say all manner of evil against you, *falsely,* (mind you) for my name sake :—for great is your reward, &c." It is

not that you should be glad of their evil speaking, but of the *reward.* See *Mathew* v. 11.

1 Tim. chap. iv. "Let no man despise thy *youth;* (that is, by any indiscretion) but be thou an *example:* (may he and Paul, indeed be ours also!) study to *show* thyself approved unto God—a workman (in his ministry) that needeth not to *be ashamed.*"

Paul to Titus chap. ii. Says, "teach aged men to be *sober,* grave, *temperate:* the aged women, that they *behave* according to godliness: (so, godliness, he admits, has its rules and restraints:)—Young women, that *they* be sober, keepers at home:—young men, that they be sober minded—*shewing,* in *all things,* (even in religious exercises,) gravity, and sound speech, (i. e. intelligent speech) that *cannot* be *condemned:* (what! care for the condemnation of the world! yes;) that *he* that is of the *contrary* part, (i. e. the opposition) may be *ashamed:* (and not *you*) having *no* evil thing (even) to *say* of you!" for he adds, "we *must* live soberly, righteously and godly. Finally, let *no* man *despise* thee;" no, not evil men themselves. May we not add, if a man

will not believe, nor receive these words, from "the stewards of the mysteries of God," neither would they listen to any counsel but *their own*, though one arose from the dead! Even now, methinks, an ill informed caviller is ready to ask, as I have before heard it, Are we not "to become as the filth and offscouring of the earth?" No! read 1 Corinthians, 4th chapter, and the *context;* and there you will see, that Paul himself uses the words; and uses them against his own followers; who were for exalting *their wisdom* against his, (as some of us do now,) and regarding *him* as naught, nay, as *filth!*"

I promised, finally, to show that christians can, by scripture command, *restrain* the Spirit, according to judgment and reason; being always ruled by the seasonableness, and fitness of things—thus: 1 Cor. xv. 26, 28, "When ye come together, and *every one* of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a revelation, &c. if there be no interpreter, (i. e. no chance of explaining your exercises,) let *him* keep *silence* in the church:—(this then is possible, Paul,) and let him speak *to himself*, and to God."

Why so? "that *all* things may be done unto *edifying*." The reason is obvious: the sole cause of our speaking in public, of God's operations towards us, at all, must be for the *benefit* of *others;* for God knows already—therefore we may "muse his praise," acceptably to him. The Apostle (verse 30th and 31st) continues: "If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first *hold* his peace: For we may all prophecy, (i. e. speak, or pray,) one by one; that all may learn, and all may be comforted:" and furthermore; "the spirits of the prophets, (the speakers) are subject to the prophets." Which inculcates this lesson: that the spirit is never sent with such power, in ordinary religious exercises, but what it may be subjected to our wills, and governed, at our discretion; or, how otherwise should we be made accountable creatures for all our actions!

But it is very possible, after all that has been said, (for I am now drawing to a close,) that some few, notwithstanding the evidences of right religion, adduced in the foregoing review, will continue to hug their former conceits and practices; thus fulfilling the senti-

ment of Charles Wesley's biographer, that "those who most want these salutary restraints, are the least disposed to receive them:" acting too, not unlike *the lines* in Hudibras, "the man convinc'd *against his will*, enjoys his old opinion still." In the language of Locke, "*they will be sure*, because they are sure; and their persuasions must be right, because they are strong in them:" and yet, they cannot be *more sure* than the pious Baron Swedenbourg was, of actually seeing and conversing with angels! I desire, however, to continue kindly disposed towards such, for "their *persuasions* may be as strong in *error*, as in truth." As I would fain "restore such in meekness," so I would wish in all gentleness, to give them every fair means of *establishing their* views; and I hope the most strenuous of them, will grant that I am sufficiently charitable, if I hold myself open to their conviction, on this single principle of future conduct—to wit: those who are in any way *singular*, should give to all their *extra* acts, both for their own justification, and for our conviction and edification, (*in* a manner *as public* as their actions—and at, and as near the time of them,

as possible,) a full, frank confessional, declaration, of the alledged irresistible manner, in which they have been actuated, or operated upon.* If from God, they may suppose he will inforce his truth with such energy, or unction, as sometimes to subdue our prejudices; and besides, it will serve to explain to, and convince the irreligious too. They who are actually filled of the right spirit, may expect to speak with some good degree of intelligence and understanding; and they who have none of this, will stand exposed, as either mistaken, or as hypocritical. By this means, God's *own* works may be glorified. For myself, I *wish* to stand open to conviction: and I am willing to draw my belief, from what I can see and understand, as done before my eyes, or felt, or perceived in myself. I wish, in all pursuits after truth, to let all my pre-conceived

* In several instances of remarkable conduct in conversion, the parties sent to Mr. Wesley, written accounts, to be read by him in public. St. John, says, "he that doeth truth cometh to the light; that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

opinions, hang about me, loose as a garment, which I may drop, so that I may be ready to believe any *new* fact, which I had not before conceived of; provided, the evidence be sufficient. I have already witnessed some affections of bodies, of well disposed pious persons, at which I have been surprised, and which I do not understand by any scripture analogy. If persons of competent judgment, enlightened understanding, and deep piety, shall therefore, in this way, display any *extra* actions and emotions, and declare the power *preternatural*, we shall eventually, by the number and circumstances of such cases, possess a *body of evidence*, by which we may at last test their real character. Whether *all* the emotions which religion *may* excite, have been told in the new Testament, I will rather leave to professional divines to settle. They have, indeed, already generally assured us, that "the scriptures are our *only* and *sufficient* rule, both of faith and practice;" as our "discipline" also confirms. I have searched the scriptures, with a view to discern, whether *we* had any *promises*, of greater effects and outward manifestations of the

spirit, than was experienced under the ministry of the apostles,—and I have not been so successful as to perceive any allusion to them. But I will not be so arrogant, however I may *think*, as to take upon myself to pledge my readers, that there is no such thing. In the "mysteries of godliness," there *may be* many heights and depths, yet hidden from the wise and prudent:—I therefore am disposed to hear and learn,—and let my reader aim at the same thing. In the mean time, those who say they have *new*, or unexpected bodily affections, or emotions, if they have a consistent regard for the honour of their God, and the comfort and consolation of their brethren, must take more edifying means of inculcating their experiences, than they have hitherto done; or they must *continue* to display themselves as unprofitably; "as him who beateth the air." If we know ourselves, we have no will to conceal or hinder any operation, which God promotes or requires. "The reproach of *Christ*, (as Mr. Wesley observes,) we are willing to bear, but not the reproach of *enthusiasm*, if we can help it."

Having in the commencement of this little work, confessed my conviction of *my* liability to error, from which even the best informed are not exempt,—I shall not be surprised, if I have mistaken somethings, and been quite ill-informed in others. But I indulge a hope, that I shall have effected so much real good, as to make the liberal minded forgive the imperfections. I shall certainly have touched the cases and causes of some real acts of enthusiasm and extravagance. I shall have "*hit* some blots:" and not have been useless in setting several upon the inquiry, and analysis of their emotions. If some who have been *misled*, should be thereby enabled to discern *themselves*, the writer will have the pleasure to reflect, that his labour will not have been altogether in vain.

I have now, I presume, succeeded in the labours I had proposed to myself; and I trust the candid, well-informed christian reader who knows his bible, and is willing to read it, free from the shackles of pre-conceived opinions and prejudice, will perceive, that I have honestly endeavoured to expose the fair truth, and so far as was con-

sistent with due *earnestness*, I have avoided severity in what I have so written. If I, then, a plain, unpretending, unofficial member of the society, have thrown any new light upon these hitherto concealed matters, what is it, but so much reproof to those whose *business* it was "to guard the flock, as those who must give an account," in that they have left *their* obligations and duties, to be executed by feebler hands:—by those too, who should rather sit to be instructed, than to teach! I now admonish such, that if they will not regard these things betimes, and betake themselves to more *enlightened* policy,* they will yet, I much fear, cause a mighty schism. The sober minded, stable christian, will feel pressed to "*come out*" from among the unstable and irregular; and will then of necessity, attach themselves to such preachers, as have the fearless fidelity, to repress enthusiasm, and to sustain the true religion. This is not spoken as of threat, but as presumption, of a future probable fact. Such a people as the Methodists *might be*, is not now in

* See Dr. Clarke, in the Appendix.

christendom:—the simplicity of their worship; their *free* salvation; their earnest prayers and diligence of labour; and their actual knowledge of, and firm adherence to the great truth—That there is *power*, and *sensible witness*, in the spiritual visitations of the Holy Spirit; gives *them* the foremost *chance* of surpassing all other present christians, both in increase of *multitudes*, and holiness of members. *Methodism*, "with all thy faults, I love thee still!"

APPENDIX.

Both John and Charles Wesley, were manifestly opposed to some *religious affections, in their time, viz:*

SENTIMENTS OF JOHN WESLEY.

"Fondling words in devotion, says he, are an odious, and indecent familiarity with our Maker. The word *dear,* [how often do *we* hear this !] he says, he never uses, either in prose or verse; or in preaching or praying. He says, there is *no scripture* which justifies it."* This improper *familiarity* with God, is naturally productive of very evil faults. But some may say, *refraining* from these warm expressions checks the fervour of devotion. It is very possible it may ! *such fervour* as has *passed* for devotion ! It may *prevent* loud shouting, horrid, unnatural screaming, repeating the same words twenty or

* Remember, *Christ* says, "henceforth ye shall ask *me* nothing; but whatsoever ye shall ask *the Father,* in my name, shall be given you."

thirty times, jumping two or three feet high, throwing about the arms or legs, both of men and women, in a manner *shocking*, not only to religion, but to common decency! But it will *never* check, much less prevent, true scriptural devotion. It will rather *enliven* the prayer, that is properly addressed. "Some of the hymns of Dr. Watts, says he, dedicated to divine love, are *too amorous;* and fitter to be addressed by a lover to his fellow mortal, than by a sinner to the most high God."

[*See Wesley's Sermon, on knowing Christ after the flesh.*

In 3rd vol. of Wesley's Journal, speaking of the *Welsh*, he says, "Some give out a verse, which they sing over and over again, *with all their might*, thirty or forty times: mean while, some are violently agitated, and they leap up and down in all manner of postures, frequently for hours." He adds, "I think there needs no great penetration to understand this. They are honest, upright men, who *really* feel the love of God in their hearts: but they have little experience, either of the ways of God, or the devices of Satan. So he serves himself of their simplicity, in order to wear them out, and to bring a discredit on the work of God."

Speaking of the case of the Rev. Mr. Bell, whom he expelled, together with two other *ministers*,—Maxwell and Owen, for *enthusiasm ;* he says, (read his Journal, 3rd vol.) " I dislike that which has the appearance of enthusiasm: Overvaluing *feelings*, and inward *impressions ; mistaking* the mere work of *imagination*, for the voice of the Spirit ; and undervaluing *reason*, *knowledge* and *wisdom*. I dislike your spending so *much time* in several meetings, and keeping some from *other duties*. [This is a very great evil: some omit family prayers at night,—and hired people, use time which is not their own—overlooking seasonable hours, as though God could not *again* be found.] I dislike the singing, or speaking, or praying, of several at once—too bold and *irreverent* expressions ;—using poor, flat, bald, disjointed hymns ;—your using *postures* or *gestures*, highly indecent ; your *screaming*, even so as to make the *words* unintelligible ;—the *bitterly condemning* any who oppose, pronouncing *them* hypocrites, or not justified."*

* Afterwards, *Bell* affected to turn *prophet ;* and Maxwell and Owen fell away, and all died sinners! The French prophets, though once so numerous, where are they now ! all gone.

"I am willing, (says John Wesley,) to bear the *reproach* of *Christ;* but not the reproach of *enthusiasm,* if I can help it."

John Wesley, in his 5th vol. of Journal, speaking of the people near Chapel-in-le-Frith, near Macclesfield, says, "many have been awakened, justified, and soon after perfected in love: but even while *full* of *love,* Satan strives to push many of them to extravagance. This appears in several instances: first, frequently three or four, yea, ten or twelve pray aloud all together. 2nd, Some of them, perhaps many, *scream* all together, as loud as they possibly can. 3rd, Several *drop down* as dead, and are *as stiff* as a corpse; but in a while, they start up, and cry *glory! glory!* perhaps twenty times together." "Just so, he adds, do the French prophets: and very lately, the *jumpers* in Wales; bringing the *real* work into contempt."

But let no enemy to the *power* and *effect* of genuine religion, presume to assert from any thing above said, that Mr. Wesley was unfriendly to *occasional,* strong, outward manifestations of convictions, and conversions: his Journals give many accounts of unusual outpourings of the Spirit, and of his pleasure in them. Some suddenly fell down, crying for mercy; and

others quickly rejoiced, giving thanks. Such *power*, we pray, may continue with *us*. But these, by their *actions* and *words*, evinced that the *power* was *preternatural*; and hence, others were convinced. If some other societies of good men, witness not these things, may it not be, because they are less disposed to receive the Spirit in much power? But few have the grace to bear our reproach.

Wesley sought a *medium*, between *still* circumspection, and unrestrained and thoughtless jestures, and vociferations. Let *us* follow his wisdom, and his prudence. As *rational* and converted creatures, we are never bereft of reason, or judgment; and we are always bound to use them; remembering always, that Satan himself will always *push* us to act unseemly. Let us aim that all be done to *edification!*

It is most carefully to be marked too, that *all* of Mr. Wesley's objections to excessive exercises, is made *exclusively* against professed christians:—For convicted sinners, he offered no rules. Their convictions he expected were *irresistible* and reluctant: and as to their grosser emotions, he often saw and knew that they were excessive, even to agonies of body and mind, by the actual resistance of *Satan*.

Such *exposed* actions from men who were just before avowed enemies, and scoffers, want no apology nor *interpretation.* Nor is it likely that men so remarkably engaged, would be *quieted* till they found the *Comforter.* Mr. Wesley supposed some of these very strong cases "of outward signs and wonders, were *suffered,* or permitted to the converts, because of the hardness of our hearts; unready to receive any thing, unless we see it with our eyes, and hear it with our ears." For he remarked, that after these things had been *suffered,* in the beginning of a work, the work of conviction was much more calm and unalarming. The writer of the present work, has his sentiments in entire unison with Mr. Wesley's.

Sentiments of Charles Wesley.

In Charles Wesley's Life, page 158, speaking of a good revival at New Castle, he says, "many people had been greatly agitated during the preaching: falling into convulsive motions, with strong cries:—many no doubt were in the deepest distress; but he perceived that these *natural* affections were soon imitated to attract notice. Some actually did this. One fell into a fit, and beat himself heartily,—I let him alone: and instead

of *singing over him*, as had often been done, we left him to recover. A girl, as she began her cry, I ordered carried out; [John Wesley ordered several carried to a distance,] and although her convulsions, had taken away the use of her limbs, she soon found the use of them, when left without the door, and *walked off!* The first night I preached here, half my words were lost, by the *outcry* of several *unstill sisters*, who got as near me as they could, and *tried* who could cry loudest: but they became *quite still*, when I gave out, that whosoever began above my voice, should be carried, without any man's *hurting* or *judging* them, to the far end of the house. Yet the Lord was with us, mightily convincing of sin and of righteousness:" and he adds, "since I preached the gospel, it never had greater success than here at New Castle." Yet says he, "we have no more fits among us, and I have done nothing to *hinder* them, only declared, that *I do* not think the *better* of any one for *crying out!*"

"Mr. Wesley (says his biographer,) *frequently* repeated these remarks: but *experience* had frequently shewn, that they who most want these *salutary restraints*, are the least disposed to receive them: not being willing to *part* with their imaginary comforts, by being undeceived."

Sentiments of Rev. John Fletcher,

As expressed in his letter of 22d, Nov. 1762, to Charles Wesley.

"I have heard the melancholy news, of many of our brethren over-shooting sober and steady christianity in London. O! that *I* could stand in the gap, and by sacrificing *myself*, shut this immense abyss of enthusiasm.

"The corruption of the best things, is always *the worst* of *corruptions*. Going into an extreme of this nature, or only *winking* at it, will give an *eternal sanction* to the vile aspersions, cast on all sides, on the purest doctrines of christianity; and we shall sadly overthrow, overthrow in the *worst* manner, what we have endeavoured to build for many years.

"Allowing, that but half of the report is true, the rest shews, that spiritual pride, presumption, arrogance, stubbornness, party-spirit, uncharitableness, prophetic mistakes,—in short, every sinew of enthusiasm, is now at work in many of that body.

"Insist, first in love—afterwards with authority, that they either *stand* to the *sober* rule of christianity, or *depart from us*.

"*Fear not;* the Lord will take care of his ark; and though hundreds of *Uzzahs* should

fall off, most of them would return with Noah's dove.—Have *faith* in the *word*, and leave the rest to Providence !"

[*See Fletcher's Letters.*

Mr. Fletcher had a young woman in his church, of extravagant deportment; of whom he remarks :

"It seems to me, as if that old murderer, proposed to *ruin* the success of my ministry at Madely, by means of Miss A—. She emaciates her body by fastings—falls into convulsions in my church and assemblies—and is perpetually tempted to suicide. What to do, I do not know; for those who are so tempted, pay as little regard to *reason*, as the miserable people in Bedlam. Prayer and fastings are the only resources."*

Sentiments of Rev. J. Edwards.

The following, is selected from John Wesley's edition of "*Edwards on Religious Affections.*" Mr. Edwards was largely concerned, in a great revival of religion in New England; and was moved to write what he did, from what he *saw* and considered.

* This last was actually done every Tuesday, till she recovered, *See Fletcher's Letter, 5th January*, 1763.

After saying, that "great part of true religion lies *in the* affections, and that *this* must necessarily affect the *motion* of the *fluids*, and of the *animal* spirits," he says, "there are *other* spirits, who have influence on the minds of men, *besides* the Holy Ghost.—There are many *false* spirits, who with *great subtilty* and *power*, *mimic* the operations of the Spirit of God; and *they* therefore, affect things, in which *we* had no contrivance. *Some operations* we can clearly discern; such as dreadful and horrid suggestions: and so too, the *power* of Satan *may be* as *immediate* in *false* comforts and joys; and *often* is so in fact.

"It is no *sure* sign of *true* spiritual affections, that they come with texts of scripture, remarkably *suited* to us;—they *may* be true: but is it not true, that Satan *can* and *does* bring texts to the mind, and *misapply* them to our deceivings? If he has power *to bring* any words at all, to the mind, (and we admit that *he does* bring evil words and thoughts,) *he may* equally have power to bring words contained in the Bible. If he was permitted to bring *texts* to Christ himself, [why was Christ so tempted, but to *show* us, how *we* might expect to be tempted!] why *may* he not equally present them to

men ? And if *he may* abuse one text, *he may* many: and if *he can* present one *comfortable* and *promising* text, so he may a thousand; and so *remove* rising doubts, *confirm* false joy and confidence, of poor *deluded* sinners." [Be not high minded, but *fear*:—Take heed then how *you* stand.]

"Christian *practice*, then, is the most proper *evidence* of gracious *sincerity*, and the *chief* of all the *marks* of grace, is *obedience* and *good works*. I had rather, says he, have the testimony of my *conscience*, that I have such a saying of my supreme Judge, on my side,—'He that hath my commandments, and *keepeth* them, is *he* that loveth me:' than *any sign* from my *experiences*."

Sentiments of Dr. A. Clarke, and his advice to preachers.

"You must not forget, that our congregations are at present more *intelligent*, than they formerly were. If this were not so, it would be a *proof* that God had never sent *us!* For he has promised, (Jer. iii. 15.) "I will give you pastors after my own heart, who will feed them with *knowledge* and *understand-*

ing." But you fear to loose your simplicity! No. "*True* knowledge (of God and *his works,*) ever keeps its *possessor* humble; because, *it alone* shows him how much *is to be* known, and how little *he has* learned:—and I scruple not to say, *religion* is *discredited,* while professed *without* knowledge. Sound knowledge, civilization, and genuine piety, have marched with *us* hand and hand, all over *this* nation. That which *formerly* passed in the *day-break* of our *revival, will not* pass *now.* The people are *more* enlightened: they have *grown up* under our ministry, and they now require *stronger* nourishment.—We are *now* to minister to *young men* and *fathers,* and should be *careful* to keep before them, the *same distance* we had at the beginning. To this end *we must* cultivate our *minds,* and pray much to God.

"To the utter confusion of all, who would plead for the absurd and infamous *maxim,* that 'Ignorance is the mother of Devotion,' it might be easily *proved,* that there is a *very intimate* connexion between *vital* godliness, and a studious cultivation of a man's mind.

"I am *convinced,* from an observation of thirty years, (when he wrote) that the work of God, among the Methodists, is at present, abundantly

more extensive, *more* scriptural, more *rational*, and at least *as deep*, as it *has been* from the beginning.

"Let your *deportment* (says Dr. Clarke in another place) be serious, weighty, and solemn. Take care of any thing *awkard*, or affected, either in your *gesture*, phrase, or pronounciation; and beware of *clownishness*. Say not, these are unimportant matters. He that regardeth not little things, shall fall by little and little. Sing no hymns of your *own* composing, unless he be a *first-rate* poet; such as Dr. Watts, or Mr. Wesley, which *may* be the case with *one* in every *ten* or twelve *millions* of men. [Alas! poor negro hymns! Dr. Clarke could not have borne them.] Say nothing to make your congregation *laugh*. ["He that ministers, says Cowper, the grand concerns of judgment and of mercy, should beware of lightness in his speech; and should not stoop to *catch a grin*, when he should *woo* a *soul!*"] Be always solemn! *never* be boisterous.

Self confidence, will soon lead to *forgetfulness* of God; and then you will speak your *own* words, and in your *own* spirit too. [Mark how this is verified by Whitfield's *confession* of *himself*.] Avoid all quaint, and fantastic *attitudes*:

they *prejudice* and *grieve* many. [Ah! Clarke, who cares for these things now a-days!] There is all the reason in the world, why he should avoid *queer noddings, ridiculous* stoopings, and erections of the body; shifting from side to side, and *every other* air which tends to disgrace, and render them contemptible. "Let no man despise thee," says the apostle. *Every* sentence you *speak*, should tend to *edification:* therefore, speak not too low: this is a greater *evil*, than *screaming* itself. [So *screaming*, in the opinion of Dr. Clarke, is an *evil!*]

"It is much to be *lamented*, that the benevolent *gospel*, (i. e. good tidings) of the Son of God, is represented by *many*, as a system of *austerity* and *terror:* but no man *can* represent it *as such*, who *understands* it. The *place of torment*, is *uncovered*, in the sacred scripture, that men *may* see and escape it: and the teacher of righteousness, should only *describe* the *devil*, and his *reign* of *misery*, so as to cause men to *fall in love* with *Christ*, and his heaven of *glory*.

"Many seem to have *hell and destruction* for a constant text; and all their sermons are *grounded* on these subjects. All their discourses *should not* be employed in this way. It

is the *doctrine* of Jesus,—of Jesus dying for our sins, and rising for our justification;—Jesus, shedding his love abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit; filling us with the meek, holy, *gentle* mind, that was in himself, that ever can be available to a sinner's conversion and comfort! From *long experience*, [mark this; of an aged and most approved minister!] *I can* testify, that preaching the *love* of Christ, who bought us, is of *more* avail to *convict* sinners, *comfort* the distressed, and *build* up believers in their most holy faith, than all the fire of hell. For, as *it is* possible to make *void* the *law*, through a *lawless* method of preaching *faith*; so *it is* possible to make *void* the *gospel*, by an *unevangelized* preaching of the *law* and its *terrors*. Let the *law* be used *as* God uses it; let *it* enter, that the offence *may* abound, and that sin *may* appear *exceeding* sinful: then *remove* the vail, and let the face of the gospel *shine* forth *on* the wretched. Let the sinner's *astonished* soul, contemplate the *fullest* proofs of God's *willingness* to save men. *Shew* these things to the *vilest*, and most profligate, and then let *them* disbelieve the *philanthropy* of God, if *they can*. *In this way*, the testimonies

of Christ *encourage;* and thus, he that prophesieth, speaketh unto men *to comfort.*"*

CONVERSIONS OF EMINENT METHODISTS.

Having at the close of the second chapter, said,† that the early leaders of Methodism were given to us, both for example and precept; it has been thought of some importance to show to the readers of this work, in what manner they were severally exercised in forsaking their sins and coming to Christ.

It appears then, from the published *Lives* of the two Wesleys, John Fletcher and Dr. Coke, that all were at first equally satisfied with their moral attainments, as a sufficient means of salvation. Each were afterwards, equally sensible, that morality alone, however rigid, could not save them. All were changed in heart, by

* It may be questioned, whether we should behold such struggles, and anguish, in convicted persons, as we do, if more of Clarke's manner prevailed. For as Wesley observes, "it is the *accuser*, who with great power, tells them there is no hope—they are lost forever, &c." But in this he would be *foiled*, if man "could *not* disbelieve the *philanthropy* of God."

† *See page* 45,

equal moderate means: and none of their joys, were very sensible in their change. All were changed eventually, by getting their minds well instructed in the easy way of salvation, by faith; "for every one *that asketh* receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth:" When they in faith received the ample promises of mercy, contained in the written word, they were changed, by their praying and expecting with full trust and confidence. Both Charles and John Wesley, received their first faith on the reading of Luther on justification by faith: Charles Wesley, "became astonished, that he should have ever considered it a new doctrine." Charles Wesley and Fletcher, were *converted* at their bed sides, and alone;—John Wesley, while sitting in a church, hearing the reading of Luther's preface to the Romans; and Dr. Coke, in his Pulpit, while preaching to others. Their several first and chiefest emotions, were as follow,—to wit: Charles Wesley, found "rest and peace;" John Wesley "felt his heart strangely warmed;" John Fletcher, was affected with "uncommon cheerfulness;" and Coke, perceived "peace to his soul, and his fears dispelled." All four, were primarily, and weightily affected with distrust, in their ori-

ginal state of strict morality, by the positive and artless assertions of plain *experimental* christians. Both Charles Wesley and Fletcher, say, "they felt no great emotion of joy;" and Coke and John Wesley, though in the Church, were so tranquil, that none but themselves were then knowing to the change wrought in them.

Charles Wesley, says, "he felt, after his conversion, no great emotion of mind, nor transport of joy, in any of the means of grace; but he found himself calm and serene, and fully satisfied of God's goodness to his soul. He was thus early taught, he says, by experience, to place little confidence in any of those sudden, and transient impressions, which are often made on the mind, in public or private acts of devotion; nor was he uneasy, because destitute of rapturous joy: He was thankful for the more calm and more permanent operations of divine grace on the mind, by which his heart was kept in peace, staid upon God, and watching unto prayer."

John Wesley, says, "my soul continued in peace; but as to transports of joy, I was taught, that God giveth, or withholdeth, as he sees fit. I found all my strength lay, in keeping my eye

fixed upon him; and the Testament constantly afforded me great and precious promises."

Fletcher, says, "peace came at first, with so little observation, that, he was not aware of his change of heart, but by its effect in subduing his most besetting sin,—*anger:* and even this escaped his remark, till he perceived by two or three temptations, that he really withstood them like a *new creature.* I began therefore to think it was the Lord's doings. Yet I prayed earnestly to be kept from false peace; but the more I prayed, the more I saw it was *real.* Though without great emotions of joy, I did not doubt, but that joy and a full assurance of faith, would be imparted in due time. Reading afterwards, some comfortable passages of Scripture, my hope was greatly increased, my joy full, and I thought myself conqueror over sin, hell and affliction."

Seeing thus, the placid manner in which those examplary leaders were exercised, may not an inference be drawn, that our prevalent outcries would much seldomer occur, if penitent men were more enlightened, to perceive the very merciful dispensation of the Gospel: That it proclaims full pardon, and most gladly bestows super-eminent blessing, upon all who

will welcome it, however vile have been their former lives. If repenting men, under such gracious promises, yet write bitter things against themselves, may it not be the work of Satan, and *ignorance* combined? For what can prevent *a burthened sinner,* actually coming cheerfully to take hold on such cheering promises, but distrustful unbelief, arising from *an ignorance* of the promises, so peculiarly made *in his favour?* Is not belief, or faith, the very opposite of this ignorance and unbelief! Are we not to be saved by faith! and does not "faith come by hearing the word of God!" (i. e. by knowing the Bible promises!) And can it be the work of the Good Spirit, to convict men contrary to his own promises; which say, "he willeth not the death of the sinner; but every one that calleth upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved?" Can such a Spirit lead men into dismay and woe, *as some have taught,* on purpose to make their deliverance more manifest, and their joy more sensible?

"So much sorrow, says Fletcher, as will cause us to forsake our sins, is quite sufficient; though it be ever so light, and of ever so short a duration."

Mr. Fletcher, who attained the highest sal-

vation, tells us, "he was never much afraid of hell and punishment;"—Nor did he mourn greatly; as he often felt drowsey, even in his prayers. But at this insensibility, he was concerned, and *strove to feel more than he did;* until he was advised by Mr. Wesley, not to build on what pains he could feel, but to go straight to Christ, with all his sins. Another friend too, told him *to hope,* rather than to fear: whereupon I felt, says he, resolved to hope: and so going to bed with more hope and peace than formerly, he awoke and prayed, and was *blest.*"

THOUGHTS ON OUR OBLIGATIONS TO ACQUIRE JUDGMENT AND KNOWLEDGE.

It is curious to observe the prejudice, which has existed in some well disposed persons, against those who cultivate their minds; and so become advocates for a religion, which is according to knowledge. Those who are uninformed, and are willing to remain so, seem to be strangely fearful, that the sense of knowledge leads the mind from its *simplicity.* They perceive such are not so *credulous* as others; and they infer, that what *they* are more prompt to *believe* with less examination, is better evidence of *their* faith:—and as they

have heard of "knowledge which puffeth up," and "vain philosophy which deceives," they readily conclude, that those who can more curiously search into the *foundations* of their belief, are *too* "slow to believe," and are indeed affected with a vain philosophy.

But it is believed to be an important fact, tested by experience, that true religion is *not hindered* by the *doubts* of the *superficial*, provided those doubts arise from the enquiries which divine wisdom has consecrated. They may be delayed from a hasty embrace of crude notions, by which they might have found temporary consolation ;—but they will get in exchange, for delay and enquiry, stable and abiding evidences of a well grounded conversion :—such as will not be swept away by the first blast of adversity, or temptation.

It is the glorious character of our Divine Gospel, that it is no respecter of persons : and therefore, as Methodists, we most gladly receive the least in character, and humblest in knowledge, into the most unreserved brotherhood. In this way, some are necessarily introduced, who were before quite devoid of a just knowledge of things, either in nature or grace. Such, therefore, should expect humbly to re-

ceive instruction, and not to be so vain, as to conceit they know all that should be known, because they are elevated to new relations, and to absolute equality in privileges :—our teachers should teach such as they severally need.

Dr. Clarke has declared, that "there is a very intimate connexion between *vital* godliness, and the studious cultivation of a man's mind." He was himself, a most special proof of his own doctrine. "True knowledge, he adds, so far from destroying our simplicity, makes us humble; because, it teaches us how much *is to be* known, and *how little* we have learned:" and he adds, "I scruple not to say, that religion is *discredited*, while professed *without* knowledge." Take too, a remarkable evidence, from John Wesley's 4th vol. of his Journal :—speaking of the people of Norwich, who attended his preaching, whom he said, were remarkably an uninformed people—he says, "I find no people, so eminently *unstable as water*, as these :—out of two hundred, which I left last year, sixty nine are now gone! Then he adds, "what a blessing is *knowledge*, when it is sanctified? what stability *can* be expected without it? For let their *affections* be ever so lively, for the present, yet what *hold* can you

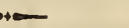
have upon a people, who neither know books, nor men; neither themselves, nor the Bible; neither natural, nor spiritual things."

How very earnest was St. Paul with Timothy, even inspired as he was, that he should give himself to *reading;* that all might witness his improvement. See too, how he charges him in another place, to be careful to bring the rolls (i. e. the books) with him—for St. Paul *himself* had much need of them! The reason is obvious:—God has given the light of reason, whereby we are capable of acquiring, and much increasing the stock of knowledge: "men shall run to and fro, (i. e. enquire) and knowledge shall be increased:" and therefore, from the *gift* already given, we perceive new discoveries and improvements continue to be made:—And as this gift is *sufficient*, in connexion with religion, in religious concerns, *he will not*, most surely, allow indolent men to take a shorter means, by requiring him to work miracles, of conviction and evidence, where *they* will not use the means of *evidence* already bestowed. Divines, by patient enquiry, have opened to our view, almost all we know of the scripture, since the Apostles left us. Besides this, we are here placed in "this Isthmus of a

middle state," in a probationary *preparation*, for "another and a better world," and our good Creator, intends us to *qualify* ourselves here, for our higher enjoyments with him in glory: and in proportion to our advancement and attainments here, we are promised to exist in the life to come. From such views of this subject, the eminent Dr. Watts, in his interesting work "on the state of separate spirits," has argued, that as our minds are imbued most *here*, so they will continue in their identity *there:* and hence he infers, that David, the sweet singer of Israel, will be the chief musician, in the high praises of the hosts above—Moses will still have the closet manifestations of God—Newton, will be a great spirit, in exploring the wonders and the wisdom of creation,—and Locke will be most delighted in searching the faculties of angel minds.

The inference which should be inculcated from all the preceding is, that as christians, we are bound by every obligation to improve our mental faculties, so far as we are able, by the reading, or hearing of as much *useful* knowledge as we can: and we should beware, that those who have least knowledge of the philosophy of things, whether of matter or

mind, are therefore most exposed to be misled, by *impressions*, which Satan may subtlely inspire. Even Whitfield's wisdom and knowledge, was not proof against the power of false impressions! God help us, ever to be *sober* inquiries after truth!—preserve us from heated imaginations! It being certain, that where most *real* religion is, there Satan will strive most to subvert. Let those, therefore, who are most at ease in Zion, possessing only the form, be not vain-glorious, and censorious of *us*, if *they* quite escape these things. *Their* security may be death.



Mr. Wesley's thoughts, on the visible and active powers of Satan, and of other spiritual agents.

In his Journal of May 1768, speaking of the extraordinary faculty of Mary Hobson, a good woman of his society, in Sunderland, who saw and conversed, as she supposed, with many *spirits* at different periods of time—he remarks: "the English in general, and most men of learning in Europe, have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions, as mere fables! I am sorry for this. It is a compliment,

and concession from *Bible* believers to deists, athiests, and *materialists*, that I will not grant: for giving up witchcraft, as they know, is in effect giving up the Bible:—but if but *one* account of the intercourse of men with separate spirits be admitted, (as they well know) their whole opposition and unbelief must fall to the ground. The belief of these things, *has had* the suffrage of the wisest, and best of men, in all ages and nations. What pretence have I to *deny* well attested facts, because I cannot comprehend them; or have not myself seen them!"

Similar sentiments prevail in his sermon on Mark ix. 38, viz. "we saw one casting out *devils* in thy name, &c." He remarks: "as the Holy Spirit possesses the souls of good men, so the evil spirit possesses the souls of evil men; and he is *continually* working in such: only the *manner* wherein he possesses them *now*, differs in general, from that of old time. *Then* he frequently *tormented* the *bodies* also, and *now* but *rarely*:—and the *reason* of the difference is plain.—Then he aimed to drive men to *superstition*, therefore he wrought as *openly* as he could;—but us he aims to drive to *infidelity*: wherefore, he *now* works as covertly and privately as he *can*; for the more secret he is, the

more he prevails. Wherefore in France, England, Italy, &c. he is measureably hidden, but in savage and barbarous countries, (as to the Laplanders, &c.) he appears as barefaced as he can; still to *fix* them in idolatry and superstition. But where men are enlightened, did he appear to *them* and affright them, they might fly to the God of Heaven;—but with sinners who dwell in christendom, his whole art is engaged, to make *them* deny and disbelieve his very being, until he can have such in his own place. With such, his business is to blind the minds of the understanding, so that the light of the glorious gospel might not shine upon them." But who can behold the abominations even now practised in Christendom, and not perceive the absolute dominion of the evil one, in the full possession and controul of men's passions and wills. *From such, the ministers of Christ still cast out devils;*—and the struggles and agonies of some such *possessed* men, show, *even now*, how *hardly* "the strong man armed" is expelled."

It may be remarked, on these premises of Mr. Wesley, that well accredited writers have, in several instances, given details of very extraordinary, and seemingly preternatural appear-

ances, among the northern nations of Europe, even in modern times. Mr. Wesley has given many extracts from such, in his early magazines. The present Hindoos, Africans, and American Indians, give very many evidences of their dealings, as they suppose, with evil spirits;—working magic, not unlike the Magicians of Egypt. Glanville has left a large work, containing collected facts, as he believed, of witchcraft. The *laws* of England, shew, they were formerly the subject of serious public notoriety and concern. Mr. Wesley gives some strange circumstances of evil agency, under his own observation, and in some instances, in his own father's house. In our country, the case of the Salem witches, who were publicly tried and condemned, in the presence of the governor, and crouded assemblies in the courts, however affected to be ridiculed now, is unanswerably *proved*, to have been above any *known* power of mere human agency. Let any one even read the cases of trial, recorded in Marshall's American history, preceding the life of Washington, and say whether fanaticism or enthusiasm *alone*, can sufficiently account for the *bodily* exercises, which then appeared in open court; and the strange perversions of vision, and of *natural*

affection, which then occurred. Mr. Marshall has indeed, ascribed them to *delusion;* but he has done this in the fashion of the age, which has found it easier to give them *vague* names, than to account for *involuntary,* extra-human actions. Without pretending to declare *for, or against* opinions formerly so universally accredited, I will only add my opinion, that modern sceptics, have by no means analized the *causes* of such visible effects. They in fact, in calling them *fanatic,* and *enthusiastic,* have only given *names* to visible *effects,* leaving the *causes,* still unexplored, as some do still, to some absolutely *religious* exercises. This is not *analizing,* or developing, according to any just rules of philosophy. We can even now remember, that formerly, conjurors and fortune tellers, &c. among us, did seem to succeed in several remarkable instances, to point to the discovery of lost property,—the healing of unaccountable deseases, &c. If any of these black arts, had formerly any super-human agency, we are glad to admit, they seem now to have been banished from among us: and if Mr. Wesley, and others, have thought that evil spirits continue to exist in places, only in proportion to their spiritual darkness, it is not invalidated by our present

deliverance from such visible agents; since we all know, the *light* of the gospel, and the increase of *prayers*, have greatly increased all over our land! Mr. Wesley's sermons, above cited, gives pretty plausible reasons, why Satan should *conceal* his operations, where the gospel is most preached. Besides, if all who hear the gospel, could *see* the effects of Satan there told, *faith* in the written word, would not have an object, but all would be *sight* and demonstration. "Blessed are those who not having seen, have yet believed!"

These remarks have been indulged to an unusual length, as preparatory to many instances of satanic power, manifested in the bodies of men, now to be given in illustration of the present work. And as all this bodily exercise has been derided by some, as caused by some idle hope or fear, these reflections have been made to prepare the minds of such, to read the following facts.

The power of Satan, exemplified by John Wesley.

Journal of May 1739, relates the case of J. H—n, in London. He was a man of regular life, and of religious, external profession, in the

church. "He came to see my ministry; to see my people affected, as he supposed, by their delusions; against which he spoke to many with much zeal. As we were going thence, one met us, to inform us, he was "fallen raving mad!" I went with his neighbours into his house, and found him on his floor, and two or three men were holding him as well as they could. He was crying out, "behold the just judgments of God:" and immediately fixing his eyes on me, and stretching out his hand, cried "Ah, this is he, who I said was a deceiver; but God has overtaken me:—this is no delusion." He then roared out—"O thou devil! thou cursed devil! Yea, thou legion of devils! thou canst not stay—[mark, here he knew that the power of Satan was violently hindering him from coming to Christ!] Christ will cast *thee* out:—I know *his* work is *begun*:—tear me to pieces if *thou* wilt: but thou canst not hurt me!" He then beat himself against the floor, his breast beating as in the pangs of death, and great drops of sweat trickling down his face. We all betook ourselves to prayer—his pangs ceased, and both his soul and body were set at liberty!" [Can any man explain away these remarkable influences, as arising from mistaken conceptions of reli-

gion, such as some would call enthusiasm! did ever any *notional* errors ever so affect any man's *body!*]

Journal, 1st. vol. year 1740. I was a little surprised at some, who were buffetted of *Satan*, in an unusual manner, by such a spirit of *laughter*, as they could in *no wise resist*, though it was pain and grief unto them. I could scarce have believed the account *they gave me*, had I not *known* the *same thing* ten or eleven years ago: [meaning that it actually occured to his *brother* and *himself;* for he adds,] part of Sunday, my brother and I, *then* used to spend in walking in the meadows, and singing psalms: but one day, just as we were beginning to sing, he burst out into a *loud laughter*. I asked him, if he was distracted? and began to be very angry; and presently after *to laugh as loud* as he! nor could we possibly refrain, though we were ready to tear ourselves in pieces, but were *forced* to go home, without singing another line." [Who could have possibly believed this of *John Wesley*, but on his own veracity!]

At nearly this same time, 21st. May 1740, his Journal records, to wit: "In the evening, such a spirit of *laughter* was among *us*, that many were offended. But the attention of all

was soon fixed on poor L. S. whom we all knew to be no dissembler. One so violently and variously torn of the evil one, did I never see before. Sometimes she *laughed* till almost strangled; then broke out into cursing, and blaspheming, then stamped and struggled with incredible strength; then cried out, O eternity! O that I had never been born! at last, she faintly called on *Christ* to help her, and the violence of her pangs ceased. We were mostly convinced now, that those who were under this strange temptation, could not help it: only E. B. and A. H. were of another mind;—but on two days later, God suffered *Satan* to teach *them* better. They were suddenly seized in the same manner as the rest, and laughed, whether they would or no; almost without ceasing. Upon prayer being made for them, they were delivered in a moment." [Shall we dare to reject such a plain detailed *fact*, however incredible to *us*, when so explicitly vouched by John Wesley himself! *we* may be glad, if Satan has less power now.]

Journal, March 1743, vol. 1. "I concluded my second course of visiting [mark how vigilant to watch over the *conduct* of his flock!] in which I inquired *particularly* into two things: 1st,

The *cause* of those, who had almost every night the last week, *cried out aloud during the preaching*:—2nd, The reasons of those who separated from us. As to the former, I found they had all been persons in health; and not at all subject to fits. That this had come upon every one of them in a moment, without any previous notice, while they were either *hearing* the word of God, or *thinking* on what they heard. *That, in that moment, they dropt down,* lost all their strength, and were seized with violent pain. This they expressed in different manners: some said, they felt just as if a sword was running through them; others, that a great weight seemed upon them: some felt quite choaked; others, that it was as if their heart and their inside was tearing to pieces." Mr. Wesley then proceeds to give his *opinions*:—"these symptoms I can no more impute to any *natural* cause, [we hope unbelievers will think of this, and consider if *they* can find a *natural* cause;] than to the Spirit of God. I can make *no doubt,* but it was *Satan* tearing them, as they were *coming* to Christ: [even as he often did in the gospel:] and hence proceeded those *grievous cries,* whereby *he* might *design* to *discredit* the work of God, and to *affright* fearful people from

hearing that word, [mark this !] whereby *their* souls might be saved." "I found (he says too,) that their *minds* had been as variously affected, as their bodies :—of this, some could give scarce any account at all; which *also*, I impute to *that wise Spirit*, purposely *stunning* and *confounding*, as many as he could, that they might *not be able* to bewray *his devices !*—others gave a clear account of their conviction and sense of sin, and the abiding wrath of God on them; and *then* the *accuser* came with great power, telling them 'there was no hope, they were lost forever.' *Then* the pains of body seized *them* in a moment, and *extorted* those loud and bitter *cries*."

Mr. Wesley's Journal, mentions a case at Bristol; "many of us joined in prayer, for one that was grievously tormented. She raged more and more for about two hours, and then our Lord gave her *rest*. One who saw her operations, murmured at it—but when he went home, he was seized while praying, with such amazing feelings and dread, as made him also agonize, till praying people came to deliver *him also*, from the violence of Satan."

January 1743. I witnessed a very odd kind of madness in Mrs. K.—, whom I had been sent to visit:—after singing, I kneeled down to

prayer,—when I felt as if I had been plunged into cold water, and immediately there was such a roar, that my voice was quite drowned. She was then raised up in her bed—her whole body moving at once, without bending one joint, or limb, just as if it were one piece of stone ;—then it was writhed into all kinds of postures—the same horrid yell continuing. But we left her not, till all the symptoms ceased, and she was rejoicing and praising God. [Who can disbelieve this, on Mr. Wesley's circumstantial detail: and who can account for it, from any *natural* causes ?]

Having thus shown, some strong evidences of preternatural influences, in *England, &c.* (and several more could have been given,) it will not be amiss, to close the whole, with some instances of our own, in the United States, to wit:

THE JERKS IN TENNESSEE.

"I had heard, says Lorenzo Dow, of the *jerks*, or jerking exercise, which appeared first near Knoxville, in August 1804, to the great alarm of the people. As I doubted the reports I heard, I set out to see for myself. In February 1805, I preached in Knoxville, to hundreds

more than could get into the court-house; the governor being present: about 150 appeared to have the jerking exercise. I thence rode 18 miles to hold a night meeting, and had about twenty Quakers among my hearers; but their usual stillness was interrupted; for about a dozen of them had the jerks, as powerful as I had seen, even to making them grunt. I have seen all denominations of religion exercised with the *jerks:* gentleman and lady, black and white, young and old, without exception. I passed a meeting house, where I observed the undergrowth had been cut away for a camp meeting, and from 50 to 100 saplins were left, breast high, on purpose for the people, who were *jerked,* to hold by.—I observed where they had held on: they had kicked up the earth, as a horse stamping flies. A Presbyterian minister told me, while he was preaching, the day before, some had the *jerks,* and a young man from North Carolina, attempted to *mimic* them, and was soon seized with them; and being ashamed, attempted to mount his horse and be off, but his foot jerked so, that he could not put it into the stirrup—but he was helped on, and then could not set alone."

"I believe it does not affect those naturalists,

who wish and try to get it to philosophize upon it;—and rarely those, who are the most pious; but the lukewarm, lazy professor, is subject to it. The wicked fear it and are subject to it: but the persecutors are more subject to it than any: and *they* sometimes have cursed and swore, and damned it, whilst jerking. There is no pain in them, except resisted, and then it will weary more in an hour, than a day's labour. At liberty camp meeting, in Tennessee, I saw the jerks, and some *danced!* a strange exercise indeed! this, like the jerks, is involuntary, but both *may* be resisted, for both require the *consent* of the *will*:—if not yielded to, the jerks *worry* much, and the dancing if resisted makes very great *deadness* of mind. I have seen the *jerks* in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky."

Lorenzo, seems to think they may be permitted of God, to convince men; but is it likely, *He* would use any measures, which should make "the most part" to *blaspheme*, when he has so many better ways! Why too, use any means never before noticed in 1800 years, nor even alluded to in Scripture! but is it not, too much like the cases before mentioned by Mr. Wesley, and ascribable solely to the influence of that same *evil*

spirit, who loves to be present in every revival, to disparage the work of God! Is it not rather permitted in our eyes, on purpose to apprise *us* of his great power, and to tell us, to beware *what* spirit we follow: and how shall *we* shun his devices, if we take not heed to these things! We admit that "Satan comes also" even among the Sons of God! but we are seldom expecting to *see* any display of *his* subtleties. Where the gospel too, is *newest* and least regarded, there he is *at first* as in Tennessee, in most power, because least subdued by prayer and fasting! Observe too, who *escape!* "the *pious*" who are "fenced about" and preserved from his wiles, and the *reasoning* class who would most philosophize and analize it. Those whom he affects most, are, first, his own peculiar children, the *persecutors*—then the unconcerned and careless; and last, and least, the lukewarm and half awakened!—they are thus, near *all* his own children; but of the latter the wiley spirit sometimes deceives himself—for they, by the providence of God, get alarmed and *pray*, and so are often lost to him!—Since religion has become more prevalent the jerks have subsided.

Power and state of religious illusions, as exemplified in various religious professors.

The fame of the extravagance of the bodily exercise of the French Prophets, in the last century, was then general throughout Europe. Mr. Wesley gives two instances of those whom he saw. Two men came to see him, to deliver a prophetic message; and said, they would not eat nor drink till it was fulfilled. He, disregarding their pretension, did however, shew them into a cold and solitary room, where they sat all day, and then silently withdrew, without challenging his conviction of the errand. In another case, he visited, by request, a woman: after sitting in silence sometime, she began to be greatly agitated, and seemed shut up from outward observation: at intervals she came to herself, and then in incoherent rhapsodies of *scripture* gave her exhortations.

The "ranters," both in England and New-England, called Quakers, but disowned by the real Quakers, were numerous in both countries. They considered it meritorious, to enter and disturb churches. In England, a female, (says Neale,) entered into White-Hall chapel, *quite naked*:—another came into Parliament,

and broke a trencher; saying, "thus shall ye be broken." Several of them went through towns and villages denouncing judgments and calamities upon the nation: and others have undertaken to raise their friends from the dead. They seemed to design to reduce all religion to *allegory*. Against these *Ranters*, Barclay, Gough, and other Quakers have written, as persons outraging all decency and order. Even in New-England, sixty years ago, the Ranters there, sought to disturb the worship of others, and were glad to be ill treated, as supposing it meritorious. They would enter a church with a spinning wheel, and attempt to spin: another would strike against the pulpit, and cry out, awake! awake! another would enter, calling out, it is against the word of God to make long prayers!

How strange was the infatuation of *James Naylor;* who, until his gross error, was an admired speaker among the early Quakers. He received divine honours of his followers, who believed him to be "the Prince of Peace, the only begotten Son of God:" and as he entered into Bristol, on a led horse, they cried "hosanna, holy, holy, is the Lord, &c." They kissed his feet and licked his wounds. His

own illusive belief seems to have been, that Christ dwelt in him, and that he might therefore lawfully permit his followers' devotions, in honour to the spirit which dwelt in him. So he construed it; but he was convicted of *blasphemy*, by the Parliament, and had his tongue *burned* through, and his forehead branded. He afterwards came to his senses, and repented of his extravagance; saying in his publication, I *renounce my* acts, and all those ranting, wild spirits, that gathered about me, in that time of darkness, with all their wild acts, against the honour of God." In this case, we behold, not only his own illusions, but that he could actually find a *body of people* to partake of his errors—to *rejoice* in them, and to *confirm* his own!

About the same time, arose the sect called *Muggletonians*. Muggleton, and John Reeves, asserted, they were the two witnesses spoken of in Revelation xi. 3. The former published a paper, asserting "that he was the chief judge in the world, in passing sentence of eternal death and damnation upon the souls and bodies of men; and that he had already cursed and damned many; and that no spirit of Christ could be able to deliver from his curse." R. Farnsworth, among the Quakers, wrote against

his pretensions,—but he met with *followers* who recorded his prophecies. He was sentenced to the pillory, and died 1697.

Even among those who continued accredited members among the Quakers, there were several instances of those *misconceptions*, as I apprehend, which occasionally most beset those who follow the rule of "particular faith," which in itself, is a species of enthusiasm. To this cause we ascribe the journey of two women, Catherine Evans and Sarah Cheevers, to Leghorn and Alexandria; and of another to the grand Signior; by which the former endured three years imprisonment by the Inquisition in Malta, and much suffering, without effecting their object, or any other apparent good. John Philby, and William Moore too, must needs go into Hungary, where they suffered torture and imprisonment, without attaining any visible good end. In these cases they went, because "pressed in spirit," i. e. felt their minds drawn that way. By this rule of action, it is said by Neale, the Protector Cromwell was actuated. "One of his favourite principles, says he, was a particular faith;" that is, if any thing was *strongly* impressed upon his mind in prayer, he apprehended it came immediately from God; but if there were

no impressions, but a *flatness* in his devotions, it was a *denial*:—it was therefore impossible, (he adds,) that a man's conduct could be just or consistent, while it was directed by such uncertain principles."

In more modern times, we have whole societies of deluded religionists. Such are the adherents of Johanna Southcote, who lately died in England, and received semi-divine honours:—Jemima Wilkinson, among us, in the North West part of New-York:—and the shaking, and dancing Quakers near Albany, and at Harmony, near Pittsburgh; neither of whom admit of marriage.

The inferences from such premises, should be, that men may be deluded, not only individually, but *collectively;* and even abide in their illusions, as well as compacted societies. We shall see too, from instances hereafter adduced, from Mr. Wesley's observations in his societies, that it is a property of our nature, to be misled; and thus we may learn, how very much it behoves us *at all times*, to restrain our affections and passions, within the rules of right reason and Scripture precept.

The power of enthusiasm, exemplified by John Wesley.

In September 1740, his Journal records:—"I met with one, who having been lifted up with the abundance of joy which God had given her, had fallen into such blasphemies and vain imaginations, as are not common to men. In the afternoon, I found *another* instance,—one who after much love of God in the heart, became wise, far above what is written; and set her private revelations (so called) on the self same footing with the written word. He then gives some instances of her delusions.

September 1742. "Finding many had been offended at my sermon, who were supposed strong in faith, I determined to examine the matter thoroughly. I heard them relate their experiences, and approved of their feeling the working of the Spirit of God, in peace, and joy, and love:—but as to some of them "feeling the blood of Christ, running upon their arms, or going down their throat, or poured like warm water upon their breast, or heart; I plainly told them, it was mere empty dreams, of an heated imagination." [Thus it is manifest, real professors *can* believe strong delusions!]

June 1742; "I had a long conversation with Mr. Simpson:—I am persuaded, that whatever he does, is in the uprightness of his heart, but he is led into a thousand mistakes, by one wrong principle: the making *inward impressions* his rule of action and not the *written word.*"

December 1742; "I was surprised and grieved, at a genuine instance of enthusiasm. I. B. who had received a sense of the love of God a few days before, came riding through the town, hollowing and shouting, and driving all before him; telling them, "God had told him he should be a king, and tread his enemies under his feet." I sent him home immediately, and advised him to cry night and day to God, to deliver him from Satan."

Journal, June 1776; "I talked largely, says John Wesley, with a pious woman at New-Castle, whom I could not well understand—I could not doubt of her being quite sincere; nay, and much devoted to God, [mark, her sincerity and devotion could not save her!] but she had fallen among some *well meaning* enthusiasts, [mark, there were many,] who taught her, so to "attend to the inward voice," as to quit the preaching, the Lord's supper, &c. I find no

persons harder to deal with, than these :—*one knows not how to advise them.* "They must not act contrary to their *conscience,*" though it be an erroneous one ;—and who can convince them that it is erroneous ? none but the Almighty."

Even Mr. Wesley himself, was once mystically inclined—his Journal of December 1788, speaking of his brother Charles' Poems, says, "some still savour of that *poisonous mysticism,* with which we were both not a little tainted, before we went to America.—This gave a gloomy cast, first to his *mind,* and then to many of his verses—this made him frequently describe religion as a melancholy thing ; this so often sounded in his ears, "to the desert," and strongly persuaded in favour of solitude."

His Journal of July 1778 ; speaking of the "life of Mr. Morsay," then published, whom he had known for many years ;—he says, "he was a man of uncommon understanding, and greatly devoted to God ;—but he was a consumate enthusiast, even *forty years* ago !—not the word of God, but his own *imagination,* which he took for divine inspirations, were the *sole* rule of both his words and actions. Hence

arose his marvellous *instability,* taking such huge strides, backwards and forwards; hence his frequent darkness of soul: for when he departed from God's *word,* God departed from him:"—he wonderfully blends solid piety and wild enthusiasm; and he is therefore a most *dangerous* writer." Mr. Wesley's Journal contains many other similar cases.

The following is J. Wesley's advice on enthusiasm.

"Beware of that daughter of pride *enthusiasm!* O keep at the utmost distance from it: give no place to an heated imagination. Do not hastily ascribe things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, impressions, or revelations, to be from God. They may be from him: they may be from nature: they may be from the devil. Therefore, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God. Try all things by the *written word,* and let all bow down before it.* You are in danger every hour, if you depart ever so little from Scripture: yea, or from *the plain literal meaning* of any text, taken in connexion with

* When the Bishop of London examined John Wesley, he asked him if he was not *enthusiastic* in some things—his memorable answer was, "I make the *word of God* the rule of all my actions, and I no more follow any *secret impulse* in lieu thereof, than I follow Mahomet or Confucius."

the context. And so you are, if you despise, or lightly esteem reason, knowledge, or human learning: every one of which is an excellent gift of God, and may serve the noblest purposes. Pray that you yourself may abound in them more and more. To expect knowledge without searching for it, is one general inlet to enthusiasm.

"The very desire of *growing in grace*, may sometimes be an inlet of enthusiasm. As it continually leads us to seek *new grace*, it may lead us unawares, to seek something else new, beside *new degrees* of love to God and man. So it has led some, to seek and fancy they had received gifts of *a new* kind:—one ground of many of such mistakes, is, the taking every fresh, strong application of any Scriptures to the heart, to be a gift of a *new kind;* not knowing, that several of such Scriptures [he here enumerates several kinds,] are not fulfilled *yet;* that most of the others, are fulfilled when we are justified; the rest the moment we are sanctified.

"Another ground of mistake is, not considering deeply, that *love* is the highest gift of God: that all visions, revelations and manifestations, whatever, are little things compared to love.

"I say, yet again, *beware* of *enthusiasm!* such is, the imagining you have the gift of prophecying, or of discerning spirits; which I do not be-

lieve one of you has ; no nor ever had yet. *Beware* of judging people to be right, or wrong, by *your own feelings*. This is no Scriptural way of judging."

[*See his Tract on Christian Perfection, in the book of discipline.*

Rev. George Whitfield's candid confession.

"I came (says he) *soon* into the *world*,—I have carried *high* sail, whilst running through a *torrent* of popularity and contempt; and *by* this means, have sometimes been *in danger* of upsetting. I *know* I am a man of *like* passions with *others*, and consequently *may* have *mistaken nature* for grace, *imagination* for revelation, and the fire of my *own* temper, for the pure and sacred flame of holy zeal,—which cometh *from* God's altar. Alas! alas! in how *many* things have I acted *wrong!* I have been *too rash* and hasty in giving characters, both of persons and places :—I have too, *often* made *impressions without* the written word, as my rule of action. Being fond of Scriptural language, I have *often* been *too bitter* in my zeal : *wild fire*, has been *mixed* with it; and I *find* I have *frequently* written and spoken in my *own* spirit, when *I thought* I was writing and speaking *entirely* with the assistance of the Spirit of God." What amiable penitence and candour!

Sentiments of the great and good Mr. Locke; on religion and enthusiasm,—prejudice and error.

[*See vol. 2nd, 4th book, on the human understanding.*]

"Men therefore, *cannot* be *excused* from understanding the words, and framing the general notions relating to *religion*, right. For men, may not be called rational creatures and christians, who know not so much as the very first principles of it.

"There is a ground of *assent*, which with some men has the same authority, and is as confidently relied on, as either *faith* or *reason;* I mean enthusiasm: which *laying by* reason, would set up revelation *without* it. Whereby *in effect*, it *takes away* both reason and revelation, and substitutes in the room of it, the ungrounded *fancies* of a man's own brain, and assumes them for a foundation, both of opinion and conduct."

"*Immediate* revelation, being a much *easier way* for men to establish and regulate their conduct, than the tedious labour of strict reasoning, it is no wonder, *some* have been very apt to *pretend* to revelation, and to *persuade* themselves that they are under the *peculiar* guidance of heaven."

"Their minds being thus prepared, whatever groundless opinion comes to settle itself *strongly*

upon their fancies, is an illumination from the spirit of God." St. Paul himself (he adds) *believed* he did well, and that *he* had a *call* to it, when he persecuted the christians, whom he confidently thought in the wrong:—but it was *he*, and not *they*, who were mistaken!

"Good men are men still liable to mistakes,* and are sometimes warmly engaged in *errors*, which they take for divine truths, shining in their minds with the clearest lights. Satan *can* transform himself into an angel of light, and *they* who are led by this son of the morning, are as *fully* satisfied of the illumination,—i. e. are as *strongly* persuaded that *they* are enlightened by the Spirit of God, as *any one* who is so, *can* be: they acquiesce, and *rejoice* in it, and are actuated *by it.*"

"He that takes away *reason*, to make way for *revelation*, puts out the light of *both*. For reason is *natural* revelation, whereby God has laid truth within the reach of our *natural* faculties; and revelation is natural reason *enlarged*, by a *new* set of discoveries, given by God *immediately*; which *reason* vouches the truth of, by the testimony and proofs it gives that they came from God. [How very important are these very

* *See Whitfield's confession. See also Edwards' sentiments.*

just *discriminations*, in using our faculties in judging of *such* things!]

"*Reason* is lost upon *such*—they are above it: they *see* light (in their own opinion) infused into their understanding, and *cannot* be mistaken in what *they feel*:—it shews itself, say they, like the bright sunshine. Thus *they* support themselves, and are sure *reason* hath nothing to do with what they *see* and *feel*. These men say they are sure, *because* they are sure; and their persuasions are *right*, only because they are *strong* in them. For when they are stripped of their *metaphor*—*seeing* and *feeling*—this is *all* it amounts to."

"The *strength* of our persuasions is no evidence at all of their rectitude:—men may be *as positive* in error as in truth.

"But to examine this *light*, and this *feeling*! These are two *very different* perceptions, and *must* be carefully *distinguished*, if *we* would not *impose* on ourselves. I may perceive the *truth* of a proposition, and yet not perceive *it* is from God, because there be spirits not divine, which *may* excite these ideas in me: and if *strength* of persuasion be *the light* which *must* guide, how shall any one *distinguish* between the delusions of Satan, and the inspirations of the *Holy* spirit? Much less is a *strong* persuasion that *it* is *true*,

a *perception* that it is *from* God, or so much as *true*:—for where a proposition is *known* to be true, revelation is *needless*: for *why* reveal to any one *what* he already *knows?* A proposition of which we are *persuaded*, but do not *know* to be true, is not *seeing*, but *believing*: and *these* are wholly *distinct* inlets to truth.—What I *see*, I *know*, by the evidence of *the thing* itself:—what I *believe*, I *take* to be so upon *the testimony of another*; and unless I have such *testimony*, *what ground* have *I* of *believing?* I MUST SEE, THEREFORE, THAT GOD REVEALS THIS THING TO ME, OR ELSE I SEE NOTHING! The question then is here—*how* do I know that *God* is the revealer of this to me? *If I know not this*, how great soever the *assurance* is that I am possessed with, it is *groundless*: whatever light I pretend to, it is but *enthusiasm!* all *such* confidence is mere *presumption*, and they run in *this circle*—to wit: "*it is a revelation, because* they firmly believe it; and they believe it, because it is a revelation!"

"In what I have said, (says Locke) I am far from *denying* that God *can*, or *doth* sometimes enlighten men's minds, in the apprehending of certain truths, or excite them to good actions by the immediate assistance of the Holy spirit, without any extraordinary signs accompanying

it. But in such cases too, we have reason and the scripture, *unerring* rules, to know whether it be from God or no. Where reason or scripture is *express* for any opinion, or action, we *may* receive it as of divine authority: but it is not the *strength* of our *private* persuasion, *within* ourselves, that can warrant it to be a light or motion from Heaven; nothing can do that but the *written* word of God *without* us, or that *standard* of reason which is *common* to us, with all men."

NOTE TO PAGE 112.

This note ought to have been appended there, to the remarks on the words, "we are become as the filth and the offscouring of the earth."

The above words, and some of similar import, have led some of our brethren earnestly to inculcate the notion, that *every man* who would become a christian, must make up his mind to receive *persecution and hatred* of all men, as his *appointed and unavoidable lot.* Minds thus prepared, have been insensible to just censure for real excesses, because they regarded all such objections as a proof of their persecution and discipleship:—Thus their excesses have been incurable. They have heard such *insulated* texts as these: "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake:"—"They who live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution."—"I have

chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."—"Marvel not if the world hate you." Persons, misled by such texts, (because they do not seek to understand their context) actually labour to acquire such shamelessness in their actions and emotions, as may make them disregard whatever others (even their own brethren) may think or speak of them. They quite overlook the absolute fact, that millions have had the love of God, and have died triumphant deaths, who never, in all their lives, encountered any persecution whatever!

Let us now to the Law and to the Testimony, for an explication of this matter! Our Lord (Matt. x. 22,) says "*Ye* shall be *hated* of all men for my name's sake." He says not this of *us*, but of *ye*, the twelve apostles, whom he is then commissioning, and who were then to be hated, (i. e. disliked) in *a peculiar* manner, because of their attachment to his then disliked *name*. Some had then called him Beelzebub. This whole chapter, of 42 verses, is entirely occupied with their peculiar commission and instruction. That it was *peculiar*, is manifest, by their being gifted to work miracles, (v. 8,) and to live without purse or scrip; (v. 9,) and when brought before Governors and Kings, for his sake, the spirit. (v. 19,) was to give them, in that same hour, what they should speak. The word *hated*, has not now, in general, the same acceptation which it had in the time of King James, when it was so translated. It is a Saxon word, meaning simply,

"*contrary to love*"—i. e. *not* loved;—see Johnson's folio dictionary. It might therefore be read, ye shall be *dis-liked* of all men, &c.! It is in this sense that Jesus elsewhere says: "he that *loveth* his life shall lose it, and he that *hateth* (i. e. loveth not) his life, shall keep it." So also in Amos: "*hate* (i. e. love not) the evil, and *love* the good." The words *all men*, prove too, that the men of that day only were intended; because *all men* would now embrace many millions of christians, as hating the twelve apostles, which would be absurd. Besides, it was *the fact* even then, that all men did not hate them, for many believed on them through their miracles, and fed them; and therefore it is more just to suppose, that the *all* (for *men* is not in the original) meant only the Governors, Princes, and other men in authority, before whom it was said they were to be brought and tried.

The 2 Timothy, iii. 12, says, "yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." This, the same class of our brethren, use, as meaning, that persecution *must* be the lot of *every* godly person. Now is this at all *the fact* in our free and happy land? And does not the context show, as clear as a sun beam, that the apostle simply means, that every godly man is obligated by his meek profession, as a christian, to suffer, i. e. to bear, to endure patiently, ("persecutionem patientur") persecution, when it befalls him? [The same apostle says to the Corinthians, "being persecuted, we suf-

fer," i. e. we bear it.—] "Thou has fully known (says Paul to Timothy, in the same connexion, for it is him he is instructing herein) *my* patience, persecutions and afflictions, which I *endured* at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra;" and therefore, he says to him *also*,—chap. iv. 5,—*endure* afflictions, &c. So far from its being our absolute lot to suffer by afflictions, that St. Paul actually *cheers* his son Timothy, by declaring "*out* of them all, the Lord delivered me!"

Some of our most irregular brethren, have with much complacency, affected to make the term *godly* stand for themselves; fondly imagining, that their brethren who have not fellowship in their emotions, are indeed the persecutors of whom Paul spoke.

Perhaps it ought to be intimated, in closing this work, that this manner of using scriptures, without reference to the context, is not peculiar to the Society of Methodists. The practice is occasionally too prevalent among others. If examples were cited from Books and Sermons, a volume, instead of this note, might be written.—It is to be regretted, that the scriptures have too often been used as a nose of wax, which may be fashioned to every feature. The practice may have originated from a very innocent cause; because citations which can run into the sense of any religious composition, without establishing a doctrine or opinion contrary to the original sense, may be tolerated, as we do other ornamental quotations. In the exceptionable manner, above-

mentioned, I might have enforced my general arguments, in this book, by citations like these; viz: "bodily exercise profiteth but little,"—and "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, is of great price in the sight of God." Their abstract sense certainly suited my arguments; but as they were not said in reference to excessive bodily exercises, and boisterous acclamations, that I know of, they would not have been relevant, nor honest quotations.

☞ As this work is closing, the public is favoured with an account of that excellent woman of God, Mrs. Mary Fletcher. Let my readers examine it, and see, if they can, if she was in any way conversant with such a religion as this Book protests against. The following are some of her views; viz: "The Lord shewed me I was not to set joy as the mark, but a ready submission to his will."—"I am more drawn to a quiet waiting."—"Holiness is not to be measured by perfect joy, but by perfect resignation."—When she was sanctified, [it was in a select meeting for prayer] "I felt a calmness overspread my spirit, and by faith I said, thy will be done in me; and in *that* I felt my rest:" "I gave not the least sign [to those around her] by either word or motion, of what I felt within:—I felt an unspeakable peace to my soul, but I did not feel joy." Afterwards, her general exercise was "a solid rest."—She was converted when alone, and while sitting and *musing* on the means to attain faith.

FINIS.

D. & E. FENTON,

At their Book & Stationary Store,

WARREN STREET,

One door above Mr. A. Hunt's old Stand, Trenton, N. J.

Have always on hand, a general assortment of

BOOKS,

In the various departments of Literature.

ELEMENTARY BOOKS

In English, Latin, Greek and French, adapted to the use of Colleges, Academies and common Schools.—Also,

Stationary and Fancy Articles

a considerable variety.

They have Just Published

Memoirs of the Public Character & Life of Alexander, the first Emperor of all the Russias,—*Price 87½ cents.*—Also,

A Compendium of Geography; containing, besides the matter usual in such works, a short System of Sacred Geography; for the Use of Schools. By the Rev. J. C. Rudd. *Price 75 cents.*